

Danny Bedrosian Keeps the Funk Going, Boosts Habousi and the Armenians

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Armenians can be found in nearly any corner of the world and in nearly every profession, so perhaps it shouldn't be surprising that one of the longstanding members of George Clinton's Parliament-Funkadelic collective, a group which is one of the standard bearers of funk music, is Armenian-American Daniel "Danny" Peter Bedrosian. Bedrosian simultaneously remains involved in Armenian music and culture.

Parliament-Funkadelic, known as P-Funk for short, has its roots going back to the 1950s and 1960s. It consists today primarily of two bands, from which its name is composed, and doz-



Danny Bedrosian performing on the keyboard (photo Rodji Munoz). Left, George Clinton receives his copy of "Exaltation"

ens of musicians, all led by George Clinton, also performing in various spinoff groups. It created numerous top-ten and number one hits on American rhythm and blues music charts.

Into the World of Music

The 40-year-old Bedrosian has performed as keyboardist with P-Funk for 18 years and worked for Clinton for almost 22 years. Born in Lawrence, Mass., Bedrosian was classically trained in piano, as his parents ran a piano school, and studied from the age of 3 until he was 18 or 19. He began training in jazz and see P-FUNK, page 10



(DANNY BEDROSIAN PHOTO)

Opposition Leader Elected Deputy Speaker Of Armenian Parliament

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — After a day-long stalemate, the Armenian parliament voted on Friday, August 6, to appoint a leading member of the main opposition Hayastan bloc, Ishkhan Saghatelyan, as one of its three deputy speakers.

Armenia's constitution reserves the position for a representative of the 107-seat parliament's opposition minority.

Saghatelyan was nominated for it by Hayastan and backed by the Pativ Unem (I Have Honor) bloc, the other opposition force represented in the recently elected National Assembly.

The outspoken opposition leader on Thursday twice failed to get at least 54 votes needed for his election in secret ballots held during a heated parliament debate on his candidacy. The parlia-



Opposition leader Ishkhan Saghatelyan attends a session of the National Assembly after being elected one of its three deputy speakers.

ment's pro-government speaker, Alen Simonyan, spoke of a "parliamentary crisis" after the second vote.

Opposition lawmakers accused the parliamentary majority representing Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's Civil Contract party of torpedoing Saghatelyan's appointment.

"If somebody from the ruling faction thinks that by constantly not electing me they can force us to haggle or strike any deals I must say that this is not going to happen," Saghatelyan said on Thursday.

Majority leaders blamed the opposition blocs, which control 36 seats between them, for the outcome of the first two votes.

Saghatelyan was elected on a third attempt by 64 votes to 37. He pointedly thanked Armenians who voted for Hayastan, rather than pro-government parliamentarians, for his election.

"You gave us a mandate and we are obliged to fully represent you in the see PARLIAMENT, page 3

With Vaun at Helm, Project SAVE Continues Documenting History One Family at a Time

By Taleen Postian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

WATERTOWN — As Project SAVE Armenian Photographs Archives, Inc. is approaching its 50th anniversary, it will have a

new person at the helm, Arto Vaun. Project SAVE's mission since its founding in 1975 by Ruth Thomasian has been to translate the box of family photos in the attic into history. Now, with the advent of technology, it seeks to become an inter-

active site within the Armenian community and communities beyond by creating eye-opening photo exhibits, working with academic and artistic professionals, and hosting workshops for every demographic to learn and connect with the past.

A native of Boston, Vaun spent the last seven years living in Armenia, during which time he was the founding director of the American University of Armenia (AUA) Center for Creative Writing and Chair of the English and Communications BA program. At AUA, he taught courses in poetry, literature, Modernism, and creative writing and founded *Locomotive*, see SAVE, page 20



Oriental rug renovation business advertising on the side of a car on a cobblestone street. Philadelphia, 1912

Courtesy of Aram Krikor Jerrehian, Jr.
Credit: Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives





Armenian Boxer Hovhannes Bachkov Wins Bronze at Tokyo Olympics

TOKYO (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Boxer Hovhannes Bachkov won bronze at Tokyo Olympics, raising Armenia's medal count to four. The lightweight boxer lost his final bout to Keyshawn Davis of the United States 5:0 on Friday, August 6. Bachkov reached the semifinals by defeating Uzbekistan's Elnur Abduraimov 5-0 August 3.

Gymnast Artur Davtyan won Armenia's first medal at the Olympics in Tokyo on August 2. The next day, weightlifter Simon Martirosyan and wrestler Artur Aleksanyan snatched a silver medal each.



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ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I Holds Phone Conversation With Artsakh President

STEPANAKERT (Public Radio of Armenia) — President of the Artsakh Republic Arayik Harutyunyan had a telephone conversation with His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia on August 10.

The president briefed Catholicos Aram on the situation in Artsakh, the ongoing reconstruction and construction works, the problems of the citizens displaced by war. At the same time, Harutyunyan thanked the religion leader for his constant support for Artsakh.

The Catholicos, in turn, expressed his support to the people of Artsakh, voicing confidence that together they will be able to overcome the existing challenges and solve the problems facing Artsakh.

Armenia's Defense Minister Travels to Moscow amid Border Unrest

PanARMENIAN.Net - Armenian Defense Minister Arshak Karapetyan left for Moscow on a working trip on Tuesday, August 10, at the invitation of his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu.

The two are expected to meet in the Russian capital, and a number of other working meetings are scheduled too.

On Monday, Karapetyan met with Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Secretary General Stanislav Zas in Yerevan and told him that the patience of the Armenian side is not inexhaustible, amid Azerbaijan's incessant provocations and ceasefire violations on the border.

United Nations Lists Armenia among Countries with No Women In Ministerial Positions

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Armenia ranks 182nd out of 193 countries on the UN Women in Politics: 2021 map, which presents global rankings for women in executive and government positions as of January 1, 2021.

Armenia is listed among the countries with no women in ministerial positions along with Azerbaijan, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, etc.

According to the map, Nicaragua, Austria, Belgium, Sweden, Albania, Costa Rica, Finland, Andorra, Canada and several other countries have 50-percent or higher percentage of women in ministerial positions.

Notably, there is only one woman among the appointed ministers in Armenia – Minister of Health Anahit Avanesyan.

The Armenian National Assembly speaker and his two deputies are also men, but the three parliamentary factions are led by female lawmakers.



The meeting of the CSTO delegation with the Armenian Defense Ministry representatives in Yerevan

Armenian Defense Minister Unexpectedly Stern in Yerevan Meeting with CSTO Head

By Gevorg Gyulumyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN – Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Stanislav Zas met with Defense

Minister Arshak Karapetyan in a dry manner, practically in the form of an ultimatum, which was unexpected for everyone. Karapetyan declared: “We were awaiting your visit back in the month of May. That was a particularly tense period of time for Armenia, but, unfortunately,

acquiesce with activities which can result in the violation of the state borders of Armenia. We will decisively defend our territories. We, of course, desire to solve this matter in a peaceful way, demonstrating our love of peace. At the same time, our patience is not inexhaustible, and in the case of the absence of a peaceful solution to the situation created at our borders, we reserve the right to solve the situation through the use of force.”

Karapetyan's comments cannot remain without a response. The Russians know well that anti-Russian disposition increases daily in Armenia. After the 2020 war, when Russia did not officially support the Armenian side, such sentiment began to spread. It greatly increased after May 12, when CSTO did not physically aid the Republic



CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas seated in the middle of the CSTO delegation in Yerevan

Minister Arshak Karapetyan of Armenia in Yerevan on August 9. They discussed the accomplishments of military cooperation and further future possibilities, as well as in particular the occupation of territory of the Republic of Armenia by Azerbaijan starting on May 12.

Karapetyan presented the situation in a

your visit did not occur. Today, an enduring serious situation has been created on our borders. Azerbaijani armed forces in May invaded Armenian territory in two directions. This immensely upsets us. We are proponents of peace. We, in any circumstance, do not wish tension on our borders.

At the same time, we are not prepared to



CSTO General Secretary Stanislav Zas



Armenian Defense Minister Arshak Karapetyan

of Armenia, and moreover, treated the situation as a small local nuisance. In Armenia, the CSTO's position is understood to represent the official viewpoint of Russia.

Karapetyan expressed his regret that the mechanisms for reaching decisions in the CSTO structure and responding to crisis situations do not correspond to the current need for rapid responses.

It is interesting to note that only hours after the meeting, a Russian IL-76 military cargo plane was seen in the skies of Yerevan, and it is speculated that its contents were unloaded in Yerevan.



Relatives of POWs Spend Night outside Government Building

YEREVAN (news.am) — A group of relatives of the prisoners of war (POWs) who are held in the Azerbaijani capital Baku spent the night in front of the main building of the government of Armenia, and they are still there. The relative of one of these POWs told Armenian News-NEWS.am about this on Tuesday, August 10, adding that one of the Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s staff had approached them and informed that Pashinyan was busy and could not receive them today.

The relatives of these POWs say they will continue to stay outside the building.

Russia Deploys More Troops On Armenian-Azeri Border

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — The Armenian Defense Ministry confirmed on Thursday, August 5, that Russia has deployed more troops along Armenia’s border with Azerbaijan amid lingering tensions there.

A statement released by the ministry said that Russian border guards have been deployed in and around Voskepar, a border village in Armenia’s northern Tavush province. It said barracks and other facilities are now being constructed for them.

“The process is carried out within the framework of Russian-Armenian cooperation,” added the statement.

Earlier in the day Hetq.am posted a short video of a Russian flag flying on a two-story building in the area refurbished by construction workers. The news service described the building as a Russian border guard post.

Russia, which has a military base in Armenia, already deployed army soldiers and border guards in southeastern Syunik province late last year to defend it against possible Azerbaijani attacks. Syunik borders districts southwest of Karabakh which were retaken by Azerbaijan during last year’s war.

Tensions rose late last month at border sections separating another Armenian province, Gegharkunik, from the Kelbajar district handed back to Azerbaijan after the six-week war. Three Armenian soldiers were killed and four others wounded there on July 28 in fighting with Azerbaijani forces.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan proposed on July 29 that Russian border guards be deployed along the entire Armenian-Azerbaijani border. Russian officials responded coolly to the idea.

A Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Alexander Bikanov, said on Thursday that further Russian deployments are complicated by the fact that the frontier is not demarcated.

“We believe that only the immediate start of work on delimiting and subsequently demarcating the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan can ensure a steady de-escalation on the border,” Bikanov told a briefing in Moscow.

Moscow drafted in May an agreement on the creation of an Armenian-Azerbaijani intergovernmental commission on border demarcation. The move sparked Armenian opposition allegations that Pashinyan has secretly agreed to major chunks of Armenian territory to Azerbaijan. The prime minister categorically denied that.

Voskepar is adjacent to one of several small enclaves inside Armenia which were controlled by Azerbaijan in Soviet times. Baku reportedly wants to regain control over them.



Protestors in Yerevan (Armenpress photo)

These relatives had gathered in front of the main building of the Armenian government the afternoon of August 9 and demanded a meeting with someone competent from the government who can give thorough answers to their questions in terms of having these Armenian POWs returned.

The government first had said that they would receive two of these relatives, but the latter had refused to meet that way.

After some time, however, several of

these relatives had met with the Prime Minister’s spokesperson.

But after this meeting they had said that no specific answer was given to them, and therefore they will stay there until someone from the government meets with them.



The Armenian math team

Armenia Team Wins Seven Medals in Math Competition

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — The Armenian team won one gold and 6 silver medal at the 28th International Mathematics Competition for University Students, it was announced on August 9. The event was held online, with about 590 participants from more than 100 universities around the world.

Vahan Martirosyan, a student at Yerevan State University, won a gold medal, while Arman Bayramyan, Vachagan Dilanyan, Vahe Karagulyan, and Tigran Chitchyan, representing the same university, won silver medals. Arman Fahradyan, a student at the Armenian-Russian University, and Hrach Yeghiazaryan, a student at the American University of Armenia, also won silver medals.

The Armenian team was coached by Karen Keryan, Vazgen Mikaelyan and Albert Gevorgyan.

Opposition Leader Elected Deputy Speaker Of Armenian Parliament

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National Assembly,” he said, adding that he will continue “not to come to terms with the existing situation” in Armenia.

Saghatelyan, 39, is a leader of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun) party, a key component of the opposition alliance headed by former President Robert Kocharyan. He was the coordinator of a coalition of more than a dozen opposition groups that staged street protests following Armenia’s defeat in the autumn war with Azerbaijan in a bid to topple Pashinyan.

The parliament’s two other deputy speakers, Ruben Rubinyan and Hakob Arshakyan, are senior members of Civil Contract. They were elected earlier this week in votes boycotted by opposition lawmakers.

Armenian law also entitles opposition lawmakers to heading three of the parliament’s standing committees.

Simonyan complained on Thursday that the opposition factions are refusing to discuss with the pro-government majority the distribution of the 12 posts of committee chairperson. Saghatelyan made clear that there will no such talks as long as two deputies affiliated with Hayastan remain under arrest on what the opposition calls trumped-up charges.

The opposition blocs officially proposed on Friday the parliament set up a new committee tasked with dealing with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Pativ Unem leader Artur Vanetzyan said that would send Azerbaijan and the international community a message that Armenia “has not forgotten about Artsakh (Karabakh) and the people living there.”

Civil Contract’s parliamentary group objected to the proposal.

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Excavations to Uncover Hidden Past of Ani Ruins

ISTANBUL (Public Radio of Armenia) — Turkish archeologists have renewed their excavations in the ruins of Ani, a UNESCO World Heritage site. This year the work continues in four different areas. The ancient pieces that will be unearthed will be displayed at the Kars Museum, *Duvar English* reports. Ani, situated next to Turkey's closed border with Armenia, was the capital of the medieval Armenian kingdom of the Bagratides in the 10th century.

Also called “the world city,” “the city of 1,001 churches,” “the cradle of civilizations,” and “the city with 40 Doors,” the ancient city was added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2016. The ancient city houses invaluable historical buildings, such as churches, cathedrals, mosques, palaces and baths.

According to the source, the new excavation works will further uncover the hidden history of the ancient city. Planned to last for 12 months, the works are carried out under the partnership of the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Kafkas University (KAÜ).

Cham Wings Launching Aleppo-Yerevan Flights In September

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Cham Wings will start operating flights from Aleppo to Yerevan once a week – every Saturday – beginning from September 4, Zvartnots airport reports. Information on the availability of tickets, their acquisition and other details are available on the carrier's website. Cham Wings Airlines is a private Syrian airline based in Damascus, Syria.

Russian, Azerbaijani FM's Discussed Trilateral Implementation

MOSCOW (Panorama.am) — Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and his Azerbaijani counterpart Jeyhun Bayramov discussed ways of normalizing the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border over the phone on Monday, August 9, TASS news agency reported.

“A substantive exchange of views took place on various aspects of the implementation of the statements by the leaders of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia of November 9, 2020, and January 11, 2021, and on the ways of normalizing the situation near the Armenian-Azerbaijani border,” the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement. According to the Foreign Ministry, the two top diplomats also discussed pressing issues on the bilateral, regional and international agenda. “[They] highlighted the importance of the early resumption of the activities of the trilateral working group co-chaired by the Russian, Azerbaijani and Armenian deputy prime ministers on reviving economic and transport ties in the region,” the report said.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan Attends Iran President's Inauguration

TEHRAN — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan visited Iran on August 8 to meet with the newly-elected President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ibrahim Raisi. After the official welcoming ceremony at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport, the prime minister left for the residence of the President of Iran, where he was welcomed by Raisi.

During the meeting, the Iranian president thanked Pashinyan for accepting the invitation and arriving in Iran on a working visit, adding that Iran attaches importance to the continuous development of relations with Armenia in the political, economic and humanitarian spheres.

Pashinyan thanked Raisi for the hospitality and congratulated him on being elected president. He stressed that multilateral cooperation with Iran is of primary importance for Armenia.

“The centuries-old friendship of our two peoples, the close historical and cultural relations are the basis for further development of bilateral cooperation. We are ready to continue our dialogue through joint efforts and further enrich the agenda of bilateral cooperation. The fact that I am here today testifies to our commitment to deepen relations and strengthen cooperation between Armenia and Iran at the highest



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Iran with President Ibrahim Raisi

to preserve the national identity among the community.

The two leaders discussed a range of issues related to the strengthening of trade and economic ties. In particular, they considered the activity of the Meghri free economic zone and the possibility of applying

tion from the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea will be of key importance.

Nikol Pashinyan welcomed the Iranian side's interest in the North-South highway construction program and added that the Armenian government is ready to discuss the participation of Iranian construction companies in the international tender for the Sisian-Meghri section of the above-mentioned project.

Pashinyan and Ebrahim Raisi also touched upon the opportunities for developing cooperation in the energy sector. In particular, the parties discussed the steps taken to start the construction of a 400 kV power transmission line, highlighted the extension of the gas-electricity exchange program, the increase of gas-electricity exchange volumes after the operation of the third high-voltage line.

Pashinyan praised Iran for trying to bring stability to the Caucasus.

Raisi said that maintaining peace in the region is of key importance for Iran, adding that the Iranian side also considers it necessary to resolve all issues through dialogue.

The two also discussed issues related to the implementation of joint new programs in the fields of healthcare, technology, education, science and culture.

At the end of the meeting, Pashinyan extended an invitation to the Iranian leader, which was accepted.

In the evening Pashinyan took part in Raisi's official inauguration ceremony.



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan at his arrival in Iran

level,” Pashinyan noted.

In the context of strengthening bilateral ties, he said he considered the role of the Armenian community of Iran vital and thanked the government of the country for providing all the necessary opportunities

Iran's free trade regime with the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) as a stimulus to develop cooperation in this sphere. The parties considered the development of regional channels a priority, where the development of transport and cable communica-

Germany Halts Turkey Weapons Sales to Make Sure They Don't Go to Baku

BERLIN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Germany's informal hold on defense exports to Turkey remains in place over concerns about the destination of arms, a European official told journalists on Wednesday, August 4. The official said Germany wants to know the purpose of the arms exports requests. They would like to be sure that they are going to be used in Turkey, not in other countries such as Azerbaijan or Libya, Middle East Eye reports.

According to the official, Turkey has so far failed to explain the purpose of the hundreds of defense exports it has requested from Germany, and no serious conversation is taking place between the two countries to respond to Berlin's concerns over

their final destination.

Even though there is no formal arms embargo enforced by Germany against Turkey, Ankara says Berlin has put an informal hold on a large number of defense industry products that are crucial to the country's defense capabilities.

“We need to have more information about these requests. We ask questions but there are no meaningful answers,” said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the subject. “There has been no meaningful conversation between the two sides on these requests for a long time. They haven't been very nice to our military people.”

Turkey's utilization of Canadian-made

drone cameras in Libya and Azerbaijan triggered an arms embargo by Ottawa earlier this year.

Ankara has also been seeking German engines for its main battle tank project, Altay, for years. Rheinmetall, a German company, even sought to establish joint production with Turkish producer BMC.

However, Turkish military interventions in Syria and temporary arms embargoes against Ankara over the years by Germany have stalled the project.

The official said the German government that will be installed after parliamentary elections in September would make the final decision on the issue.



INTERNATIONAL

Gold Medals for the Little Singers of Armenia

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/VIENNA — All eyes this summer were on the Olympic games, where Armenia competed successfully in several disciplines. Some weeks earlier, another international event took place, albeit not followed by so many millions of television viewers, but in which the Armenian contestants walked away with gold, and not only once. The venue was Vienna (this year, due to pandemic conditions, the contest was online), and the discipline, music. It was an event with competition, but dedicated to the spirit of cooperation, mutual development and peace.

Grand Prix in different nominations in the second round. Other choirs from Armenia also won high recognition. The Geghard Vocal Ensemble earned a Gold Medal and Grand Prix in the category of vocal ensembles, under the direction of Anahit Papayan, who received an Excellent Choir Conductor award. Sona Hovhannisyan was honored with the same prize with the Hovner Chamber Choir, which won a Gold Medal in the mixed adult choir group. And the Arar Choir, conducted by Gor Melqumyan, won a Gold Medal in the Female Choir competition. The jury consists of world-famous musicians and music educators who judge contestants in 11 categories. The 14 choirs who won 1st place in their category

excellence. Hekikyan has twice received honors from the President of Armenia, the medal of Movses Khorenatsi in 1996 and the honorary title of Prominent Educator in 2010. He has served as a jury member in international competitions and has lectured on the art of Armenian choral music. In addition, he and the ALS International Association have organized and directed music festivals, among them Ashtarak (1993), Yerevan (1996), United by Song (2000), Singing Armenia (from 2001), the Song of Unity (2004, 2006), and the Komitas Festival 2017. They have assisted numerous choruses in Armenia, including in schools.

Music Capital Vienna

Given its prominent role in the history of music, it comes as no surprise that Vienna should host such an international endeavor. The World Peace Choral Festival is supported by Austria's federal government authorities, the Vienna city government, the Vienna Boys Choir, the United Nations headquarters in the city, several non-governmental organization, enterprises and public figures.

In addition to Austria, participants over the past years have come from all over the world, from western and eastern European nations, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Australia and the Americas. This year, the 11th anniversary of the festival, over 340 choirs from 55 countries participated online. They came from Armenia, Argentina, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Croatia, Chile, China (Mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau), Denmark, Estonia, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Indonesia, Israel, India, Kenya, Kosovo, Lithuania, Latvia, Mauritius, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Mexico, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Serbia, Sweden, South Africa, Switzerland, Spaska, Turkey, Tanzania, Ukraine, Uganda, United States, United Kingdom and Vietnam.

The certificate presented to winners of these medals bears the following message: "Coming together to sing, singing for a better future! Peace is the most important theme of our mankind, and music is the bridge connecting people's hearts."

The World Peace Choral Festival is the world's first choral event with peace as the theme. It is committed to promoting the development of world peace and provides a platform for communication, exchange, understanding and friendship to people who love singing and peace from all over the world." The organizers conclude with congratulations to the winners for making their positive contributions to world peace. One very concrete contribution came in the form of five concerts, held to raise funds for UNICEF. Among the choirs performing were the Ponomarev VESNA Children's Choir from Moscow, Only Boys Aloud from Wales, The Kenyan Boys Choir and Paris Boys Choir, and the COLOR MUSIC Children's Choir from Ukraine.

Learning from the Masters

Although a highlight of the festival is the presentation of awards, the focus during the 22-day process is on education, exemplified by the online master classes and workshops. These sessions dealt with theoretical, historical and very practical aspects of choral activity. This year, for example, Dr. Zimfira Poloz, musician and faculty member of the University of Toronto, led a master class on vocal pedagogy and voice as an instrument. The president of the Artistic Committee of the WPCF, Prof. Gerald Wirth, who is also president and artistic director of the Vienna Boys Choir, taught a class on breathing control as well as finding one's pitch and voice. A session by Prof. Simon Carrington of the UK, professor of conducting at Westminster Choir College USA, and Yale, focused on the close analysis of two songs. Dr. Andrea Angelini, who presides over the Emilia-Romagna Regional Association of Choirs, addressed Italy's path in the development of music, from the golden Renaissance to opera. Professor Stephen Darlington from the UK, explored how English cathedral choirs function, and introduced participants to lesser known repertoires from the early 16th century. Darlington is Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music and Honorary Canon of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford.

To see a performance by the Little Singers of Armenia, visit <https://www.facebook.com/worldpeacechoralfestival/>



The Little Singers of Armenia

The World Peace Choral Festival is indeed a special kind of festival, which brings together choirs, both young and adult, in musical education and performance. The aim is to provide participants the opportunity to engage in workshops led by world-class musicians, thus developing their own talents, and to broaden their cultural understanding through exchange with choirs of many other nations. They also engage in competition, though that is not the ultimate or central focus of the initiative. This year, top awards went to the Little Singers of Armenia and their founder Tigran Hekikyan.

Hekikyan received the Outstanding Conductor Award, and the Little Singers got the Gold Medal and the First Prize of Grand Prix, recognized as the best and absolute winner among the choirs that won the

Grand Prix; winners of the Grand Prix receive €3,000 for first place, €2,000 for second and €1,000 for third.

Armenia's Cultural Ambassadors

The Little Singers of Armenia are often referred to as the cultural ambassadors for the country, and that is not only metaphorical. In 2001, Tigran Hekikyan was nominated Cultural Ambassador of Europe by the European Federation of Choirs. Hekikyan, artistic director and conductor of the choir, founded it in 1992. He is president of the Armenian Little Singers International Association as well. Over the past three decades, the young singers have performed in Europe, North America, Asia and Africa, presenting a vast repertoire in many languages, with technical and artistic

Concern over Azerbaijan Ruling Family Influence at Oxford Center

By David Matthews

OXFORD, UK (*Times Higher Education*) — A member of the family of Azerbaijan's autocratic ruler sits on the board of a University of Oxford research center that studies the country, raising conflict of interest concerns for academics.

A body representing Armenian scholars expressed concern that the Oxford Nizami Ganjavi Centre, founded in 2018 by a £10 million donation from an undisclosed source, could neglect the study of Armenian heritage in the central Asian country, which, they say, the current government is trying to erase.

The donation was brokered by Nargiz Pashayeva, sister-in-law of President Ilham Aliyev, who since 2003 has ruled Azerbaijan amid accusations of torture, the jailing of political opponents and corruption.

Professor Pashayeva, rector of the Baku branch of Moscow State University, sits on the seven-person board of the Oxford centre, which decides which applicants are awarded scholarships to study Azerbaijan and the wider region.

"It is a source of concern that the Nizami Ganjavi Centre at Oxford came into being through a large donation of mysterious origin

made possible by an individual with the closest possible ties to the Azerbaijani state's rulers," said Marc Mamigonian, director of academic affairs at the US-based National Association for Armenian Studies and Research.

The focus of the centre is on the history, culture and languages of the region, but some topics are more contemporary – in May it hosted an event titled "Beyond the Boom: Toward Human and Social Development in the Post-Oil Era in Azerbaijan".

And for decades, scholars and journalists have raised the alarm about Azerbaijan's destruction of historic Armenian tombs, churches and cross-stones called *khachkars* in its territory.

"There is reason to be concerned about the potential impact on how the study of the South Caucasus, past and present, will be framed – that is, what will be included, what will be excluded, and what forces will influence these ostensibly academic decisions?" Marc Mamigonian, the academic affairs director of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research in Belmont, Mass., said.

There is no suggestion that the center's existing research is politically biased or flawed.

The ultimate source of its funding re-

mains a mystery. Announcing the creation of the center in 2018, Oxford said it had been made possible by "generous philanthropic support from the British Foundation for the Study of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus" (BFSAC), a UK-based charity established in 2016 and chaired by Professor Pashayeva.

The foundation was listed as a project of the Anglo-Azerbaijani Society, a body also co-chaired by Professor Pashayeva that aims to build relations between the two countries. Although its website is no longer functional, it counted the Azerbaijani ambassador to London as a patron.

An Oxford spokesman said its donations review committee "was made aware of the original source of funds for this gift, which does not come from a government," but he did not offer any more information about the source.

Robert Hoyland, professor of late antique and early Islamic Middle Eastern history at New York University, and one of the foundation's trustees, told *Times Higher Education* that the gift came from "a donor based in Europe, not in [Azerbaijan], was not made to or from BFSAC, but to Oxford University directly, and the deed of gift was made between those two parties."

Elspeth Suthers, senior manager for Caucasus Programs at the US-based National Endowment for Democracy, which has warned about autocratic donations to Western universities, said it was "absolutely correct to question where these funds came from".

She said Azerbaijan's information strategy outside the country "has been focused on making sure that there are competing claims – at least one of which is sympathetic to their position – on any issue they have a vested interest in, rather than in trying to suppress competing narratives".

The Oxford spokesman said: "The center's board comprises seven members, five of whom are Oxford University academics. Each member serves a three-year term, which is extendable for one further term, and the board reports into the university's Faculty of Oriental Studies.

"The center is formally constituted according to the university's standard provisions guaranteeing academic freedom and research independence. Applications to the center's graduate scholarship and visiting fellowship programmes are considered on academic criteria alone."

Professor Pashayeva did not respond to a request for comment.

Community News

Armenian EyeCare Project Responds To Heightened Eye Care Needs in Armenia Post-War

LOS ANGELES — It has been nearly a year since Azerbaijan's attack on Artsakh and much has changed in that time. What began as an attack targeting innocent civilians in their homes, businesses, schools, churches and hospitals ultimately led to war as it propelled Armenia's military to act. In the past year, over 5,000 Armenian soldiers have been killed, countless more have been wounded and more than half of the civilian population of Artsakh has been displaced from their homes as they seek refuge in Armenia.

It has been a tragic past year for Armenians in the region but it has also been a time when Armenia's dedicated community of supporters have risen to the occasion and lent a helping hand. Due to the immense support from dedicated donors as well as organizations like UCLA's Operation Armenia, the Armenian EyeCare Project (AECPP) has been able to meet the increased need for vision care in post-war Armenia through the organization of both emergency relief efforts immediately following the attack and ongoing relief programs that continue to offer care for those who need it.

These efforts have included urgent treatment for wounded soldiers and civilians during and immediately following the war; the launch of the AECPP's Vision Referral Program to most efficiently care for those injured and the expansion of the AECPP's Low Vision Center to offer aid to the increased number of Armenians with vision loss.

With resounding support from donors and unwavering commitment from its doctors and staff, the AECPP was able to offer a coordinated response just days after the war began, utilizing its established infrastructure, equipped clinics and trained medical staff.

Dr. Asatur Hovsepyan, AECPP's chief surgeon, was among the first physicians to respond to the need for a skilled eye surgeon and volunteered to work in the makeshift military hospital in Artsakh. Working aboard the AECPP's Mobile Eye Hospital for nearly 20 years, Hovsepyan has gained extensive surgical experience that was invaluable on the front lines. But even with these skills, he admitted that the injuries sustained in the recent war were severe and previously unseen due to new-age weapons, including cluster bombs, which cause terminal damage to the eyes. During his time in Artsakh, Hovsepyan saw up to 50 soldiers a day and treated injuries ranging from pieces of shrapnel in soldiers' eyes to aluminum-like particles undetectable on X-ray to more severe cases where eyes were irreversibly damaged due to explosions and drone strikes.

"Doctors and patients were crammed in one room of the hospital, which was in a safe zone because the main hospital was being targeted by Azeri missiles," Hovsepyan said. "At times, a team of doctors worked

see EYECARE, page 7



Local Racine Band, the "Near East Beat"

Racine Brings Back Armenian Picnic Season

By Harry Kezelian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

RACINE, WISCONSIN — After a hiatus of two years, Armenian picnic season is back and in the Midwest, the storied community of Racine, Wisconsin, kicked it off this past weekend.

The small town that has been referred to as "the Fresno of the Midwest" is home to the largest Armenian community in Wisconsin, rivalling the Armenian community of Chicago and second only in the region to Detroit. The country roots of Western Armenia run deep in this community, which primarily traces its ancestry to settlers from the villages of Tomarza and Jujun (both near Kayseri) as well as Kharpert during the first wave of Armenian immigration to the US. Finding a similar small-town environment in the Western Hemisphere, the first Armenians — workers who had been transferred from Worcester, Mass. to nearby Waukegan, Ill. — arrived in Racine in the 1890s and our host, St. Mesrob's Armenian Church, was founded in 1922. Before that year, the Racine community had to share its priest with the fledgling region known as Chicago!

The annual Racine Armenian Festival traces its roots to the church picnics sponsored by St. Mesrob's in those early years, and which have been held without fail until Covid-19 put a damper on the 2020 Fest. Now, in 2021, the Racine Armenians were back and ready to go. The festival was hosted this year at the church's property, a change from the usual location at a park on the Lake Michigan shoreline. Featuring kebab, Armenian vendors, and the "Near East Beat" Armenian band, the picnic was attended by Armenians and non-Armenians from Wisconsin, the Chicago area, and beyond.

see RACINE, page 9



Armenian Folk Dance Led By Ari Antreassian

U.S. Women's Water Polo Wins Gold Again

Just Getting to Tokyo Was An Ordeal

By Ava Wallace

TOKYO (WASHINGTON POST) — The element of spontaneity involved in tipping buckets of Gatorade onto coaches' heads or hoisting them on a team's shoulders is nice and all, but "nice" is a few dozen pool lengths away from the proper adjective to describe the U.S. women's water polo team in the gold medal game Saturday, August 7. "Methodical" might suit it better; perhaps "exacting." So naturally, the players thought to ask Coach Adam Krikorian to remove the cellphone from his pocket before they dumped him into the pool in celebration.

"We always bring him into the water with us," defender Melissa Seidemann said.

Saturday's accomplishment was worth a dunking. The United States won an unprecedented third consecutive gold medal with a dominant,



Coach Adam Krikorian celebrates with his team after winning Saturday. (AP Photo)

14-5 win over Spain in which nine players scored and goalkeeper Ashleigh Johnson kept the team anchored from the back, saving 11 of the 15 shots she faced.

Spain never had a chance after Alys Williams opened the scoring 27 seconds into the game to kick off another dominant performance for the Americans when it counted most. In the group stage, a stumble against Hungary was their first loss in the Olympics since 2008. In the semifinals, they needed a comeback victory over the Russian Olympic Committee to ensure they could continue their streak of medaling at every Olympics since women's water polo was introduced in 2000.

But the gold medal match felt almost inevitable after they led 4-1 in the first quarter, and the result was no surprise: The United States has won every major international title in women's water polo since 2014.

Even still, Krikorian prefers to speak about the achievements of this particular roster rather than the history of the program.

"People make a big deal of the three-peat — this is the first one for that team," Krikorian said. "It's this one, that team, those 13 women out there and that staff that worked their tails off to make that happen."

Part of that is how Krikorian see GOLD, page 7



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian EyeCare Project Responds To Heightened Eye Care Needs in Armenia Post-War

EYECARE, from page 6

on one patient as many areas of the body needed care. Every doctor was doing their best to save as many lives as possible.” In some cases, he had to perform emergency surgery using what basic equipment was available. Despite the conditions, surgeries went well and patients could then be transported to the Malayan Ophthalmological Center in Yerevan for follow-up care. There, the center’s Trauma Department had become a military hospital and staff worked nonstop to ensure wounded soldiers received immediate attention.

Two AECF Fellows, Dr. Armine Gharakeshishyan, head of the Neuro-Orbital Department, and Dr. Georgi Grigoryan, head of the Trauma Department helped provide urgent eye and face reconstruction for the injured soldiers. “We were working around the clock to provide immediate care to our soldiers as any delay could result in the need for a prosthesis at a later stage,” Gharakeshishyan said.

Ongoing Relief Efforts

In addition to treating immediate eye trauma, the AECF also quickly realized that many soldiers wounded in the war would need long-term, follow-up care to recover their sight, including orbital implants and ongoing assistance at the AECF’s Low Vision Center. With this in mind the AECF launched a Vision Referral Program, facilitating the highest quality eye care by connecting specialists in Armenia and abroad to discuss cases and offer the best treatment solutions. This effort has largely been made possible thanks to the generous support of UCLA’s Operation Armenia, which is a coordinated endeavor under the umbrella of the Promise Armenian Institute at UCLA and implemented through the advocacy of UCLA Health, to provide immediate medical disaster relief and long-term humanitarian aid and support to Artsakh and Armenia.

As the need for vision care in Armenia increases due to injuries sustained by soldiers and civilians as a result of the war the AECF has established a Vision Referral Program to effectively address this heightened demand. Blast burns, explosion debris and white phosphorous have been just some of the ways the wounded have been hurt and the majority of those affected have been Armenia’s soldiers though some civilians have been injured too.

The AECF’s Vision Referral Program encourages vision needs to be addressed as efficiently as possible by accepting requests submitted by people and/or organi-

zations on behalf of the injured person or by the injured person themselves. Through a broad referral process and the utilization of social media and other communication avenues to identify injured Armenians in need of care, the AECF can more promptly and efficiently provide the required treatment and rehabilitation for these injured Armenians.

The goal of the AECF’s Vision Referral Program is to facilitate the best possible eye care and treatment for individuals who have sustained optical injuries during the war by connecting them with appropriate specialists in Armenia for clinical evaluation (first-time assessment or second opinion) and determining their best treatment options. As such the program will utilize its global network to enable remote/virtual, peer-to-peer consultation between an eye care specialist in Armenia and a counterpart in another country. These consultants will include individuals and organizations outside of Armenia such as AECF volunteer physicians, non-AECF-affiliated ocular experts, second opinion/consulting organizations, and training and education organizations.

This Vision Referral Program will enhance the AECF’s treatment and rehabilitation capacities to offer the patient, individually or in combination, low vision aids (optical and non-optical devices, mobility and occupational training, etc.); ocular prosthetics and/or reoperation. The AECF encourages all individuals and/or organizations who know of an injured Armenian soldier or civilian in need of eye care to fill out a referral form. Referral forms for the Vision Referral Program can be found on the AECF’s website: www.eyecareproject.com/

Enhancement of Low Vision Center

Since last November, the AECF’s Low Vision Center in Yerevan has seen a dramatic increase in the number of patients with ocular damage from explosions and other injuries sustained during the war. Caused by heavy munition blasts, the ocular trauma is both dire and complex, often leaving patients with little to no vision at all. Those considered lucky to have avoided complete blindness need access to regular low vision services to maintain what remains of their sight.

As such, the AECF’s Low Vision Center, which was established in 2006 and located in the Kanaker-Zeytun Medical Center in Yerevan, is undergoing major enhancements to continue meeting the growing needs of Armenia’s population, including soldiers and civilians wounded in the re-

cent Artsakh War.

The AECF’s Low Vision Center has recently ramped up its services by obtaining additional equipment, including specialized optical and non-optical devices, to continue helping an increased number of patients. In addition to the updated equipment, in partnership with a group of Boston-based low vision professors, the AECF has also organized a series of online training sessions for local low vision specialists and occupational therapists to help them master new techniques in the field of low vision. These services and tools, such as vocational and life skills training, ensure that patients suffering from low vision continue to live productive lives despite their loss of sight.

The only clinic of its kind in the Caucasus, the Low Vision Center treats individuals who experience loss of sight that cannot be corrected with eyeglasses, contact lenses, medication or surgery. Low vision can hamper daily activities like reading and driving but it is not the same as blindness, as there is still some vision in the eye that may be improved with the use of special devices and lifestyle aids. The Center works with patients who suffer from impaired sight and teaches them vocational and life skills like specialized computer programs for the visually impaired. This specialized low vision treatment opens a new world for the visually impaired, providing patients with a renewed hope to continue living a full and independent life.

The AECF’s Low Vision Center currently treats over 7,000 patients a year but that number is expected to rise over the next few years as wounded soldiers with eye trauma require low vision services, prosthetic eye replacements and search for new possibilities to partially restore their sight.

“The Low Vision Center receives many patients who have been operated on in clinics across Armenia and require follow-up low vision treatment and services,” says Dr. Ani Gevorgyan, Director of the AECF’s Low Vision Center. “We help all of our patients preserve the maximum possible vision depending on the complexity of each case.”

The AECF’s Low Vision Center is currently in need of additional equipment to prepare for a new influx of patients as more soldiers and civilians undergo post-war treatment and rehabilitation. This includes optical and non-optical devices such as telescopic glasses, magnifiers, writing guides and canes as well as mobility and computer training related needs to ensure patients’ independence such as various voice

programs, smartphones and computers. Through donor support this much-needed center can be enhanced with the resources needed for the visually impaired in Armenia to thrive.

Aside from the direct emergency and ongoing relief efforts put in place, the AECF has also received many requests for aid from various medical facilities in Armenia so they too can address the urgent needs of wounded Armenians. Thanks to the organization’s efforts, hundreds of ophthalmic equipment, surgical supplies and eye implants have been donated to eye clinics across Armenia. The AECF also played a key role in coordinating donations of much-needed medical equipment outside of eye care, from supplies for abdominal surgeries to ear, nose, throat and dental tools as well as equipment for clinics both in Armenia and Artsakh.

Along with medical outreach, since the start of the war, the AECF has delivered several shipments of first aid medications, warm clothes and other necessities to soldiers and refugees. Women, children and the elderly displaced from Artsakh have also received food, clothes, blankets and more. As well, refugees have received eye exams aboard the AECF’s Mobile Eye Hospital and follow-up care like surgeries, laser treatment and eyeglasses when needed — all at no cost.

Continuation of Care

In addition to the relief efforts in direct response to the recent war, the AECF also continues its mission to make quality eye care accessible to every child and adult in Armenia. Despite the immense challenges of the past year, the organization was able to follow through with its plans for 2020 and open its fifth Regional Eye Center in Armenia, bringing eye care to thousands more Armenians in the region who otherwise would not have quick and easy access to this care. Located in the city of Yeghegnadzor in the Vayots Dzor province, the Vahagn Aglamishian AECF Regional Eye Center welcomed its first patients last fall.

The AECF was born out of crisis when, in 1992, Armenia’s healthcare system was initially overwhelmed with the wounded from the first Artsakh War. Decades after this first war the AECF is standing next to Armenians once again in times of need. Through the dedication of its physicians and staff and with help from the organization’s faithful friends and supporters, the AECF has been able to keep its promise to Armenia and bring sight to Armenian eyes even during the most trying of times.

U.S. Women’s Water Polo Wins Gold Again

GOLD, from page 6

operates, his instinct always to shy away from the praise his players heap on him for establishing the program’s culture since taking over in 2009.

But part of it is a simple fact: No U.S. women’s water polo team had ever won a gold medal after a spell in which it didn’t play a game for some 460 days because of a pandemic, forcing the players to do the best they could to replicate that intense atmosphere in scrimmages.

In a real water polo game, it’s helpful to remember, players often are swimming nearly on top of one another, kicking and shoving and pulling and, it seems, staying just this side of attempted drowning.

“Our team definitely had some tiffs, had to get at it with one another and beat each

other up every single day,” attacker Maggie Steffens said. “You can imagine the locker rooms were tense after that.”

Beyond the challenges of the pandemic, which multiple players said wreaked havoc on their mental health, the Americans had dealt with personal tragedy in what they refer to as the “quad-plus” interim between Games.

The Olympics have been a site of pain as much as joy. Five years ago in Rio de Janeiro, Krikorian found out his brother died of a heart attack at 48. At the same Olympics, Seidemann’s mother suffered a stroke; she died nearly a year ago while her daughter was preparing for Tokyo.

Attacker Kaleigh Gilchrist suffered a career-threatening injury in 2019 when she and her teammates were celebrating after the world championships and a second-floor balcony in a Seoul nightclub collapsed. Even through months of rehab, she questioned whether she would make the Olympic roster, using the extra year from

the delayed Games to work to regain the fitness she might not have had in 2020.

“Coming back from injury and losing mentors and coming back from panic and PTSD, it was a lot,” Gilchrist said. “But this extra year might’ve helped me grow and be able to compete the way I wanted to in these Games.”

When the water polo team talks about the oft-used narrative of “overcoming adversity,” it means it. Krikorian was moved nearly to tears when he spoke Saturday about the challenges of the pandemic, afterward calling himself “totally fried.”

“Obviously the world has gone through a hell of a lot the last 17 months ... so I don’t want to diminish that. But what every single one of these athletes up here, and these coaches, and these teams and every single Olympic athlete and coach and staff member that has been here to get to this point, is a frickin’ gold medal in itself,” Krikorian said. “I’m telling you right now. There hasn’t been enough written and said

about it: Just to get to this point has taken a lot. And I’m saying this now, and I’m about ready to frickin’ break down because it’s been hard.

“I think it just takes us back to the beauty of the Olympic Games. It takes us back to the beauty, even when you’re struggling, of the mental strength of these athletes. ... Yeah, we won a gold medal. But every single person who’s been here has been through a heck of a lot.”

To hear Krikorian talk is to understand why he speaks about this team singularly from his others that have won gold. Gilchrist was standing closest to him when they won Saturday, so it was her he bear-hugged first. Then Johnson, the game’s hero, high-stepped over to her coach and screamed so loud she feared she popped his eardrum.

This was all before Krikorian got dragged into the water with his team, a traditional celebration for the group. It has happened many times. This one felt different.



COMMUNITY NEWS / OBITUARY

In Memory of Rev. Dr. Markarian

By Kevork Keushkerian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

LOS ANGELES — Haigazian College was founded in 1955 as a 4 year Liberal Arts College with 43 students. In 1992, it was elevated to Haigazian University.

Rev. Dr. John Markarian was the founding president of the College. He served as president from 1955 to 1966 and later from 1971 to 1982, when he retired and settled in the United States with his second wife Inge. He had one daughter, Joanne.

My encounter with Dr. Markarian began in 1964, when I enrolled at the College as a Junior in the English Department. I had completed my Freshman and Sophomore years at Aleppo Junior College in Aleppo, Syria. I was fortunate to be given a full

scholarship at Haigazian College.

I came to Beirut in the fall of 1964 and stayed with my aunt for a week to complete my enrollment. My aunt used to live with her family in the Ja'wtawi section of Beirut. During this time, I had to take 2 taxi services to get to the College, which was hard on me.

One morning, I went to Dr. Markarian's office to plead my case for room and board at the College. When he inquired as to why I could not stay with my aunt, I explained that they lived in a one-bedroom apartment with 3 children and it was far away, in the neighborhood close to the CMC Hospital.

I also added that I could not afford to pay anything, as my father was an unskilled laborer with meager wages. Plus, the rate of exchange from Syrian currency to Leba-



nese currency was one Syrian pound to 65 Lebanese cents. So, one-third of the money that came from Syria was wasted.

Without any hesitation, he agreed, but with the following stipulation: that I had to work in the kitchen once a week, washing the dishes. I jumped with joy, thanked him from the bottom of my heart and promised to do my best not to disappoint him.

In the kitchen, on Wednesdays, I was

paired up with Haig Tilbian, another needy student from Homs, Syria. Haig later became the Registrar of Haigazian College, the Acting Field Director of Jinishian Memorial Program in Beirut, Lebanon, before he passed away at an early age. I heard he had been suffering from lung cancer, although he had never smoked in his life.

I would never forget Dr. Markarian's compassion towards needy students. On different occasions, he would commission Haig and me to do odd jobs around the College, so we would get some spending money. Any time there was a Banquet at the Armenian Evangelical High school next door, he would ask us to wait on the tables and later escort the female cooks home in Bourj Hammoud for extra pocket money.

Dr. Markarian passed away on June 29, 2021, at the age of 104, in his home in West Pittston, Penn. He leaves behind his wife of 47 years, Inge, daughter Joanne, grandson Michael, who lives in Australia with his wife and two children.

May God Almighty rest his soul in peace and grant his family the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Dora Verne Garabedian Nurse, Art Lover, Community Volunteer

HOPKINTON, Mass. — Dora Verne Garabedian, daughter of the late Dr. Charles Kishibay and Mrs. Dorothy Kishibay, passed away in Milford on August 5, 2021 at age 70.

Dora's life centered around an appreciation for art, music, education, community and family. Dora's creativity and joie-de-vivre left an indelible impression on those who knew her.

Dora graduated from Bridgeport University with a BS from the School of Nursing and received a master's degree in nursing from the University of Connecticut. Following her studies, she worked as an ICU and CCU nurse at Yale New Haven Hospital and was a pediatric nurse practitioner in Bridgeport.



Her interest in the arts led her to found the Cultural Arts Alliance in Hopkinton in 1997, which later became the Hopkinton Center for the Arts and which brought a vibrant performing and creative arts center to the town and neighboring communities. She was a lifelong flutist, including as a member of Pastiche, a women's performing arts group in Trumbull, CT and then subsequently as a member of the Hopkinton Chamber Group.

Dora contributed to the Hopkinton school system's educational development as volunteer director of In School Programs and coordinated the development of the system-wide Parent Teacher Organization. She was a passionate advocate who actively sought ways to enrich the educational experience of Hopkinton's school children.

Within the Armenian community, she was a Sunday School Superintendent and teacher at the Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection in Trumbull, CT, as well

as at the Armenian Church of Our Saviour in Worcester, and Armenian Church of the Holy Translators in Framingham, of which she was a founding member.

Dora combined her interests in art, music and community into a gift basket business, Baskets Beyond Belief, serving customers throughout the Metrowest Boston area with artistically crafted bespoke gifts.

Her flowery and seasonally-tailored voicemail greetings became the stuff of legend, with her friends and her sons' friends calling to hear her latest installment.

A consummate host, Dora enjoyed sharing her passion for cooking and baking, particularly of Armenian food, with friends, family and guests. Dora relished opportunities to entertain, whether through lavish holiday banquets or refreshing summer parties.

An avid traveler, Dora enjoyed exploring other countries and cultures.

She treasured opportunities to experience her favorite artists, classical music and opera during her travels with her husband, Tom, and particularly loved her visits to Paris and Venice.

Dora is survived by her husband of 45 years, Thomas John Garabedian and by her siblings Dr. John S. Kishibay and his wife Dr. Donna Eteson of Los Angeles, Karen Y. Kishibay of Fairfield, CT, and Darby Kishibay Hobbs and her husband James of Chatham, MA. Dora leaves behind three sons and four grandchildren: Deran Thomas Garabedian and his wife Katy Alexander and their daughter Zabel Arya of London, UK; Berj J. Garabedian and his wife Dr. Laura Garabedian and their sons Thomas, William and Charles of Needham, MA; Gregory C. Garabedian and his wife Daniella Garabedian of Somerville, MA - as well as numerous nieces and nephews and a loving extended family.

Arrangements were by the Chesmore Funeral Home, Hopkinton. Funeral services were conducted at the Armenian Church of the Holy Translators, on Wednesday, August 11.



Join a Virtual Pilgrimage to Jerusalem's Tomb of Mary, with the Eastern Diocese's VEMKAR

NEW YORK — VEMKAR, the digital ministries platform of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, will lead a "virtual pilgrimage" to one of the precious Christian sites of the Holy Land. Through an interactive online video gathering, VEMKAR will transport viewers to the Tomb of St. Mary, in Jerusalem. The virtual pilgrimage will have two sessions: the first on Friday, August 13, from 7 to 8 p.m. EDT, and the second on Saturday, August 14, from 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. EDT (with breaks throughout). Pilgrims will meet over the Zoom video platform.

The pilgrimage is scheduled in anticipation of the Feast of the Holy Assumption, which will be celebrated in parishes across the Eastern Diocese on Sunday, August 15.

Additional details on the virtual pilgrimage to the Tomb of St. Mary—including online resources to enrich your experience—are available on the VEMKAR.us website. People of all ages are welcome to join. To learn more and register for free, [log onto VEMKAR.us](https://www.vemkar.us).

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COMMUNITY NEWS



From left Khatchig Nahabedian representing TCA Pasadena-Glendale Chapter, Ara Simonian, Beshgeturian Center Trustee, Sonya Babayan of the Greater Los Angeles Chapter, Ambassador Armen Baibourtian, Mayda Kuredjian, West Coast Executive Secretary, and Ara Babayan, Chairman of the Beshgeturian Center Trustees

TCA Delegation Visits Consulate General of Armenia

GLENDAL — On August 2, a delegation from the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) West Coast led by its Executive Secretary Mayda Kuredjian and Chairman of the TCA Beshgeturian Center Trustees Ara Babayan visited the Consulate General.

During the meeting with Consul General of Armenia in Los Angeles Ambassador Armen Baibourtian, they presented the activities of the Tekeyan Cultural Association in the recent period and prospective plans.

The TCA delegation briefed the Consul General about their upcoming event on the occasion of Armenia's 30th anniversary of independence and extended an invitation to him and to the staff of the Consulate General. Baibourtian thanked the TCA delegation and gladly accepted the invitation.

In his turn, Baibourtian shared the Consulate's General plans for the Independence Day celebration. The interlocutors discussed opportunities for cooperation and ways to promote synergy.

Racine Brings Back Armenian Picnic Season

RACINE, from page 6

The food was the typical Armenian-American picnic fare. As a change of pace, the attendees were offered pastor Fr. Avedis Kalayjian's Yerevan-style pork *khovradz*, rather than lamb shish kebab.

The vendors included an Armenian book and souvenir store, and a stand offering jewelry and themed Festival t-shirts. The t-shirts sold out very quickly. Even Fr.



Racine's Der Avedis Kalayjian (right) with Der Andreas Garabedian of Chicago

Avedis' patented "Armenopoly" game was on sale — a Monopoly take-off where locations like Mount Ararat and Sardarabad replace Boardwalk and Park Place.

The Armenian folk dance music was provided by the "Near East Beat," which was composed of Kai Kazarian (guitar, vocals), Jimmy Hardy (clarinet), Vahan Kamalian (dumbeg), Stepan Fronjian (guitar, vocals), and the young Michael Kamalian (oud). Jimmy Hardy's "Kharper style" clarinet led the group through the traditional dances such as Tamzara and Halay, but the real attraction was Michael Kamalian of Milwaukee, who at the age of 20 is already a fine clarinetist and oudist. At the festival Kamalian played oud, supposedly his secondary instrument, but any 20-year-old who plays the oud that well as their primary instrument is to be applauded. Kamalian's inspiring runs excited the dancefloor, which was full of young faces his own age, high-school and college-age young Armenians from Racine, excited for the folk dances of their forebears. Yeretzgin Karen Kalayjian, a New Jersey native who met her husband Fr. Avedis (originally of DC) in the ACYOA, led many of the dances.

The weather was excellent and the hot sun shone down upon the open spaces of Racine. Not a tall building was in sight as the spectator watched the young people dance in a continuous circle to the strains of the dumbeg, oud, and clarinet which echoed across the fields of Southern Wisconsin. One felt only a step away from the village of Tomarza where so many Racine Armenians traced their roots.



Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.

Dr. Nubar Berberian 2021 Annual Awards



Dr. Nubar Berberian, intellectual, journalist, activist and editor of many ADL daily newspapers for more than 50 years passed away at the age of 94 in November 23, 2016. In his will, Dr. Berberian directed his Trust Fund managers to appropriate awards every year to college students of Armenian descent worldwide who major in either International Law or Political Science.

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ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Eligible recipients are college students of Armenian descent who major in either International Law or Political Science.
- 2) Applicant must be enrolled in a full-time graduate program in a fully accredited college or university in the world.
- 3) Applicant must provide all of the information requested on the application form.
- 4) Applicant must submit a copy of his or her most recent college transcript.
- 5) Applicant is to include a small head and shoulders self-portrait.
- 6) Application could be received by requesting from tcadirector@aol.com.
- 7) Applicants should submit applications electronically (via email) to: tcadirector@aol.com.
- 8) The deadline of receiving the applications is **September 15, 2021**.
- 9) The administrators and managers of the fund will vote the qualified winners in **October, 2021** based on the merits of each applicant.
- 10) The winner or winners will receive their awards in **November, 2021**.
- 11) Winning applicants are not eligible to apply again.
- 12) This announcement is published in Armenian, English, French and Spanish.

Watertown, MA, July 15, 2021

ADVERTISE
IN THE MIRROR

COMMUNITY NEWS

Danny Bedrosian Keeps the Funk Going, Boosts Habousi and the Armenians

P-FUNK, from page 1

then learning about rhythm and blues and funk when he was 11 or 12, but he maintains a regime of classical music training to this day, doing anywhere between three to six hours daily.

Bedrosian laughingly said his parents did not expect their children to enter into music professionally, and perhaps did not even wish it on them, as they knew what a difficult field it was through which to earn a regular living. They were pleasantly surprised, he said, when one of their children followed their vocation and reached a comfortable position in life. Bedrosian related, “They always say, we thought maybe he would *meet* George Clinton one day, but we didn’t know he would end up doing all of this.”

He related that ever since he was 11, Parliament-Funkadelic “was my favorite band, just for the fact that they played all genres, and had been around forever, even by the time I was a little kid... I loved the music, so I was always really drawn to it.” He said part of its allure was its status as the longest-run popular music band of all time, with the largest discography of any production unit of all time, and the most sampled band of all time (meaning that segments of its music are reused by other contemporary musicians).

When he was in college, the rock and roll pioneer Bo Diddley asked him to join his band and work with him, and he had other non-musical career opportunities as well, but Bedrosian had set his goal as getting a job on the road with P-Funk as a keyboard player. He did not swerve from this decision, and as he described it, “I worked and worked and worked at it until I finally got it.”

P-Funk

Bedrosian said that there have only been somewhere between eight and ten keyboard players in the history of P-Funk and he himself is the longest tenured one in the group’s history. He was trained for five years by Bernie Worrell, who was the main initial keyboard player for the group and was classically trained like Bedrosian.

Worrell was one of the first to fuse Western European classical music with African-American rhythm and blues and gospel. Bedrosian said, “A lot of people compare him to the Bach of African American composition because he has so much depth and so much transcendence.”

Bedrosian explained his role in the group as follows: “I am tasked with both the opportunity and the challenge of having to do live renditions of songs that may have five or six keyboard overdubs on them....I have been really interested in the keyboard canon and the song canon, and pride myself on knowing as much of it as possible, if not all of it.” His role is complicated because the canon of P-Funk is vast, with thousands of songs and 700 releases, and he has to know how the original keyboardist played a song on the record, and understand all his variations. Then he has to figure out how all the successive players did it, because they all introduced their own variations. They were stylistically different, even note-wise, with different rhythms and harmonics.

Clinton can be a strict bandleader but he allows performers whom he trusts some extra autonomy, Bedrosian stated. Bedrosian has made it into that group through hard work, and as a result, he said, Clinton “has given me many opportunities in the show to shine, in many different ways.” Bedrosian chooses which type of keyboards will be used and programs them himself. He has helped create some arrangements and has done a lot of writing and composition, creating parts. Over the years, he has solos here and there and has had the dominant instrument on certain songs in the shows. One example is playing the synth bass (keyboard bass) on *Flashlight*, one of the greatest hits of P-Funk.

Most notably, especially over the last three or four years, Clinton has given Bedrosian a little monologue before one of the big guitar solos of the night, where Bedrosian performs (plays and sings) alone a different song every night from the band’s history that has never been performed live before. This is a unique part of the show, because the rest of the time it is many people on stage all at the same time. Bedrosian never repeats the same song, and keeps a list of the ones he has already done, which has reached the hundreds.

His interest in the P-Funk canon evolved into the project of compiling a personnel and song encyclopedia of P-Funk history, 1955 to 2021, which is nearly completed and almost 580 pages. It is a full detailing of every single song across all the groups in which George Clinton has founded and produced, with information on who played and sang on those songs. The information, Bedrosian professes, comes from primary sources, such as about 60 members of the band, with whom he did over 80 hours of interviews, including Clinton himself and all the most important players.

Apparently many of the liner notes of the albums were incomplete or incorrect, so there is a lot of misinformation. Bedrosian said that there are some 200 different group sites on Facebook and all they are doing is arguing about who played what on which song. His book will serve as a great answer to those questions, he says, as well as an academic tool for study of P-Funk.

The P-Funk Worldview

Aside from the purely musical aspect of P-Funk, Bedrosian spoke about its philosophy or worldview: “George’s music has always had certain social implications and some of them were more political than others. The interesting thing about him is that the worldview of P-Funk is that everybody is accepted. Everybody can be a part of this. It is very inclusive and very internationalized, especially in recent years.”

Clinton’s big 1978 hit *One Nation Under a Groove* showcases the one-nation flag, which, Bedrosian explained, is supposed to

include the colors of everybody’s flags to show that everybody should come together and love one another. The 1974 song *Good Thoughts Bad Thoughts*, Bedrosian added, was also very much on the philosophical side of things.

Even on his most political albums, Bedrosian said, Clinton was not providing a single point of view. Instead, he said, “He was saying it more like, there is this alternative, and there is this alternative, and then there is that one... He has always been the kind of guy, much like Bob Dylan, for whom there are a million different stories. None of them necessarily is the idea that this is how you should think, but it is just philosophy.”

Each song has its own set of politics, and often on the most political topics, characters in the songs espouse various points of view. Even what Bedrosian thinks is probably the most political album of the group, “America Eats Its Young,” from 1972, includes the songs *Everybody Is Going to Make It This Time* and *If You Don’t Like the Effects, Don’t Produce the Cause*, whose titles reflect a positive approach. He said, “A lot of it has to do with different iterations of what makes America tick. That actually was very inspiring to me.”

A lot of the social themes have to do with the American civil rights movement and the Vietnam War. The early 1970s in particular included a lot on the latter. However, Bedrosian went on, in every era, the group has produced a really political album. In 1985, for example, “Some of My Best Jokes Are Friends” is about the Cold War relationship, and the idea that though it is supposed to be friendly, the finger is on the button (of missiles) at all times. In 1994, Parliament-Funkadelic released “Dope Dogs,” which Bedrosian said is “all about how the government pretending that it is stopping the drug trade makes more money than actually being drug dealers itself,” while “Medicaid Fraud Dogg” in 2018 critiques pharmaceutical companies making billions getting people addicted to various drugs. Clinton has also made songs dealing with

hypocrisy in government, Bedrosian said.

Perhaps more significantly, the Parliament albums often highlight breaking social taboos, periodically through personification. For example, Clinton wanted to show African-Americans in places where people wouldn’t associate them at the time, such as in the White House, or in outer space.

Informing the World about Armenia

Bedrosian’s Armenian world intersects often with his musical one and with that of P-Funk. He related, “Oh, I think from day one the whole band knew I was Armenian. Several members of the band knew I was Armenian even before I told them, because a lot of the guys grew up in Detroit around lots of Armenians. One of my good friends, Michael “Clip” Payne, who has been in the band for 40, 45 years, knew immediately. He said, ‘You are Armenian.’”

Furthermore, he continued, “I don’t keep quiet about Armenian issues. Ever since I was young, in the ‘80s and ‘90s, I remember not seeing much information in *Newsweek*, *US News and World Report*, or any of those periodicals which deal with world news on a weekly or monthly basis... what is it, not important? Western news media downplays a lot of it. That was something ever-present for me, so I have always been very loud about what is going on in the Armenian world.”

He realized that it was up to the Armenians themselves to educate and inform people. Consequently, he said, at least as far as the P-Funk collective’s members go, “They are all very aware that I am Armenian. They have all been to Armenian events with me over the world – Armenian restaurants, Armenian gatherings, even Armenian festivals, and yes, I have definitely incorporated a lot of Armenian folk music into parts of my repertoire with the band.”

His expressiveness about the Armenian story has had its effects. He said, “Being in a primarily African-American band, and playing this music, it is interesting that my most ardent supporters and friends, the ones who seem to understand and be the



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COMMUNITY NEWS

most on the side of justice when it comes to the injustices against Armenians, especially in recent years, have largely been African American.” He estimates that 50-60 percent of his fans are African Americans, and finds that they understand injustice, as it has been very much at the forefront of their history as well. He finds that they react with camaraderie and solidarity. He summarized, “Being so many people’s only Armenian friend in so many different groups, and traveling throughout the world through my job, has allowed me the opportunity to spread so much more information and get so much more support than if I had stayed in the Merrimack River valley, for example, and only had Armenian friends... It allowed me an extra megaphone, and I can tell you so many, many non-Armenians called their senators and signed petitions on our behalf because of what they learned about it, I am happy to say, from me.”

He has also done some fundraising for various Armenian causes, such as issuing “Azadom Kessab,” a single dedicated to the Armenians of Kessab when the latter was attacked during the Syrian civil war in 2014. The proceeds later were extended to Artsakh during the 2020 war. A portion of the proceeds of his Secret Army album “Exaltation” went to refugees of Artsakh and Armenian soldiers and their families.

Heritage

Bedrosian was aware about his Armenian heritage from childhood. His father, belonging to the Church of Armenia, would take him and his siblings to Armenian churches periodically, and to Armenian picnics. Bedrosian can speak some Western Armenian but no longer fluently. When the older generation, survivors from the genocide, passed away, Bedrosian’s father Peter started to speak Armenian less, and so did Bedrosian, as he no longer heard it at home. A complicating factor is that he only spoke the dialect of Habousi, a village in Kharpert province, when a child, though part of his family was also from Kharpert proper. He said that once he heard Armenian spoken by others, he realized that the Habousi dialect was very different.

Bedrosian’s great-great-grandfather Bedros was a *kehya* or village chief of Habousi, Bedrosian related, who was killed in the Armenian Genocide. Bedrosian’s great-grandfather Yeghia Bedrosian emigrated to the US before the genocide to work in the mills as a *bandukht* to raise money to return to his village. As the head of the Education-Loving Union of Habousi, he became one of the founding members of the Compatriotic Union of Habousi in 1925. He was focused, together with his son Garabed, Bedrosian’s grandfather, on the education of Armenian orphans and slaves freed from the desert after the Armenian Genocide, and the two remained heavily involved in the organization until their deaths, Bedrosian stated. The Compatriotic Union, based in Vermont, still operates, though it is not active as before, and Bedrosian said that he tries to be involved as much as possible.

The Bedrosians not only have remained staunch Armenians but have shared a common interest which the staff of this newspaper greatly appreciates. As Bedrosian recounted, “I want to point out that the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* has the title of being the only periodical that my great-grandfather, grandfather, father and myself read, over four generations.”

Bedrosian had his DNA tested through the Armenian project in Family Tree DNA, and found out that he is related to four people from the Orbelian family and also connected to them by the paternal line, which goes back several thousand years. The Orbelian feudal or *nakharar* clan ruled Syunik in medieval times, and also had properties in what is Western Iran. It is possible that the Orbelians are in turn descended from the Mamikonian *nakharar* family. Interestingly, Habousi village was settled in

part by Armenians from Iranian territories during the Ottoman-Safavid wars.

When he went to study at the University of New Hampshire, Bedrosian majored in Middle Eastern Studies, with a concentration in Armenian cultural studies, and did his historical colloquium on the 1988 Armenian earthquake. This topic was proposed to him by the university, he said, because, in his opinion, it was a little Turkophilic, and wanted to push him away from anything that had to do with past massacres and atrocities. However, he exclaimed, he still was able to include the Sumgait, Kirovabad and Baku pogroms into his earthquake thesis, all against the wishes of his advisers.

Bedrosian still follows developments in the study of Armenian history, and said that his girlfriend teases him that most of the things that he likes to watch are lectures by people like George Bournoutian on YouTube on anything dealing with the Armenian highland. He takes Armenian language lessons, and proudly declares that his children know a lot about the Armenian language, history and food, though half-Armenian.

Armenian Music

Armenian music has impacted Bedrosian’s work as a musician. He observed that he was always attracted to the music of the zurna, as he felt it was very close to the synthesizer in its shrill tones and range, though he also likes the duduk and other instruments. He said, “The music of the zurna and all of that Armenian folk music that features that instrument really was a huge influence on the types of leads and melodic sounds that I would play on the synthesizer, especially at its most menacing points, musically speaking. I think it really represents a powerful part of the Armenian sound that I don’t think is heard by the world at large.”

He incorporates that sound on some of the newer songs he is doing with George Clinton, including on the last Parliament and the last Funkadelics albums that feature a lot of things that Bedrosian is doing. They include Armenian modes and things that would not be too dissimilar from what a zurna player would do in an Armenian folksong. Furthermore, he said, “Conceptually speaking, in my own music, I tend to talk about Armenian things as well. The influence has a musical and a lyrical side to it.”

Armenian-Themed Comic Books

Ever since junior year in college, Bedrosian said that he has been working on a book which he started over and revised multiple times, but never finished. It was about the migrations of the various tribes of Armenia and how they came together to form what we know as the Armenian people today (i.e. ethnogenesis). New archaeological and genetic data have changed so much that Bedrosian said he became frustrated, with so many variables in this project.

At one point, he decided, he said, to put bits and pieces of it into comic books. He has been reading comic books ever since he was in first or second grade and always liked the idea of mythology presented in comic book fashion, mixing science fiction and mythology. This is how his comic book series Sons of the Sun, or *Arevorti*, arose.

Bedrosian said, “In doing the first issue, I found myself incorporating numerous tribes, deities and characters that were synonymous with certain geographical areas that fit into the story.” He said this format allows getting such information about the Armenian past to non-Armenian audiences, and each issue includes a map page.

It is a niche item which may appeal to those interested in mythology, fantasy, history, or just comic books in general, as well as to Armenians. Even fans of Bedrosian’s music and P-Funk form a part of the potential reader base. After the third issue comes out, Bedrosian plans on working with a major publisher to make the series

into a monthly book. For now, the copies are made in limited runs and independently distributed as well as through some comic book stores.

The first issue, *Hayk the Hero*, came out in 2019, and is out of print, while the second issue, *Vahagn the Dragon Reaper*, appeared two months ago. At the end of 2019, he digitized the first issue and paired it with his music album “Lusine and Arev,” a love story between the moon and sun.

Independently Performing and Creating

Bedrosian in addition to being a member of P-Funk, has his own bands, performing and recording independently, including Sweet Motha Child, Som’n Fierce, and Secret Army, as well as his completely solo musical work. He explained that you could look at P-Funk as being his main “job,” where although new music is created, there is also an existing discography written by other people that he has to perform. While he loves this, he said, “The artist in me – when I want the freedom of being a free agent, an independent contractor – wants to be able to do whatever it wants and have my own independent production unit at home.”

In a sense, his independent work can still be considered a branch of P-Funk, he said. George Clinton also happens to live just right up the street from Bedrosian, so they work together on many things all the time. However, ultimately, he said, “It is just restlessness. We get off the road [from tours with P-Funk] and there is so much time at home. I want to be doing music then too, so that you have your own solo projects in addition to whatever gigs you have. I keep having ideas. Certain compositional arrangements make sense for my work in P-Funk.” Others apparently do not.

When he issues albums through Secret Army, Bedrosian said, “I am always trying to use it as my vehicle for justice and knowledge. My solo albums have been a vehicle for transcendence and genre-bending, trying new things out, while Secret Army is the group for when I am off from George, that I use for more thematic content albums.”

Bedrosian has put out 18 or 19 albums in his own name over the years, starting from 2005, he said. In addition, he does a lot of freelance production and vocal work for many artists outside P-Funk. He said he just did some work for Jefferson Starship and Snoop Dogg, for example.

Bedrosian’s albums are very eclectic, varying not only one from the other but even internally. Some feature large ensembles of 30-40 people, and others just have Bedrosian. There are jazz, classical, P-Funk, Armenian and electronic music elements.

There is one constant, however. He said, “On almost every one of my albums there is at least some Armenian stuff in there, very traditional style or with just a single drone.” It could be classic Armenian pieces, variations on them, or something Bedrosian created based on Armenian material. He has some Armenian folk instruments such as dumbek, duduk, shvi and zurna, and he has been able to incorporate them in some music. He has done all-synthesizer versions of songs like Jivani’s *Sasounasar*.

His most recent album independent of P-Funk is called “Garmir Caramel,” and is a collaboration with the brothers Nalbandyan, two producers and musicians from Yerevan. Bedrosian said, “It is like a classic 1970s funk and R&B sound, but with modern production. I am really proud of it and of working with these guys from the Republic of Armenia.” They had contacted him and said that they love funk music, but an Armenian guy in P-Funk, “it just blows our mind.” And that began their collaboration in 2019.

Bedrosian has performed several Armenian folk music concerts over the years with an ensemble which can be as small as

a trio and as big as a dectet. He performed with it at the centennial of the Armenian Genocide, which not coincidentally was sponsored in part by the Compatriotic Union of Habousi, and continued with performances afterwards.

An interesting sidenote is that the name of his band, Secret Army, has an Armenian connection. Though it sounds similar to the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia, Bedrosian said, “It was not necessarily specifically this, but that we are strong, and anytime we could have a real secret army. That was from my really radical days.” It also refers to the insider understanding that there is a P-Funk “army,” which Bedrosian says continues to form the bedrock of that group – basically the rhythm section of P-Funk.

Bedrosian explained further: “I was at the time very angry, in my early 20s, but still philosophical enough. The idea was not necessarily *that* secret army, but that at any time, we should be able to have a real secret army to have real liberation from imperialism, and the liberation of our lands from adjacent countries. I would still like to see that, but the idea of reparations is definitely an interesting topic to debate.”

Although he said he has “softened over the years,” after the Artsakh war, “something like this happens, and it turns you more back towards the person you were before. My mindset is different now that I am older. I am just slightly wiser and able to internalize it in a more productive way.”

Bedrosian also uses another name with an Armenian connection, Bozfonk Moosick, for his company that handles the production and publishing of music. “Boz” for Western Armenians and Habousi Armenians in particular can mean the colors golden or gray. Bedrosian said, “My first usage of it was to attack the Grey Wolves [the far-rightist Turkish neofascist organization] and take the word back from them. Also, a lot of my philosophy is that the grey is in-between, as nothing is ever just black and white. Nothing is ever absolute.” (The word should not be confused with a word spelled differently but pronounced the same in Eastern Armenian that has a very different meaning.)

He went on to elucidate that when he started using this name, genetic information was coming out about Turkish DNA having a large percentage of Armenian component, with the Central Asian admixture really downplayed. Presumably, when the Turkic peoples arrived in the Armenian highland as nomadic horsemen, they were a minority compared to the millions of indigenous people. Bedrosian said, “The idea that you become whom you enslave was always at the forefront of what I was doing musically, especially in my younger years... Cultural appropriation of our things by the Turks had become commonplace a long time ago, way before the Genocide. So, you have this word? I am taking it back and putting it on my music.”

Covid and the Future

During the pandemic period, Bedrosian came up with something called the “request zone.” People could request any song or genre from him and he would send them a personalized video of his performing it. Bedrosian said, “The response was overwhelming. It became my main job for pretty much all of 2020. I would get multiple requests most days, and what a variety of requests there were. It was a fun thing to do.” People donated however much they wanted to pay. He also recorded one concert from home in high definition and sold tickets to it in this period.

After the halt in travel due to covid last year, P-Funk slowly is revving back into doing shows, with a series of performances in New York’s Central Park a few weeks ago and in Connecticut, and an 80th birthday party for George Clinton in Los Angeles. There will be a tour in September in the Midwest and the South. Hopefully things will continue to open up, Bedrosian said, allowing a 2022 tour to Europe.



Arts & Culture

Books

Life Against Death: Pete Najarian's *Mutual in Love Divine*

By Arpi Sarafian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

When he switches from writing to painting, “You turned from one no-money work to another no-money work, and now no woman will want you and you will never have a family,” says Zaruhi Najarian to her son Pete (also the narrator) in the episode titled “The No Money Work,” in Pete Najarian’s recently published *Mutual in Love Divine* (Regent Press, 2021). The mother knows that her son needs connections to wife and family and friends to combat his loneliness and his fears.

Mutual in Love Divine is a narrative comprising 16 episodes around the theme of sickness and death.

The episodes start with the narrator as a little boy who would light a candle and pray for his crippled father to heal, and end with the “so many deaths” of the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, a fitting finale to the countless



deaths of “the nightmare of history.”

Najarian’s vivid account of the desperate search by the rescue teams for bodies among the twisted steel cables and the concrete slabs of the collapsed buildings — “maybe there was another baby buried alive” — evokes the horrors of the death march of which his crippled father and his mother with the wooden ladle — ever-present throughout the narrative — are survivors.

Najarian’s description of the chaos, as the volunteers and the rescue teams’ shovel and haul and dig for dead bodies in the mounds, makes us “feel death and taste it and know it.” The corpses covered by sheets at the side of the city square and the coffins, “only a few yards away,” make death palpable.

While the Genocide and the nightmare of history have been central see NAJARIAN, page 13



The Language Doctor Is in

Shushan Karapetian’s Language Therapy

By Christopher Atamian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

LOS ANGELES — You would have to be deaf or half asleep not to hear the obvious excitement in Shushan Karapetian’s voice as she interviews guests on her hit new podcast, “Language Therapy with Dr. K.” The program’s stated goal is to bring to light the role that language plays in the construction of identity, even as it constantly evolves, morphs and changes into something ever more complex and interesting.

In one episode, while discussing bilingualism with noted Swiss scholar, François Grosjean, she compares notes from her own fascinating research on heritage language acquisition.

In another episode she is ecstatic and congratulatory with standup comedienne Mary Basmajian for using down and dirty sex talk and terminology in *Armenian* on her own video series “Vartoush Tota” “You are making enormous contributions to keeping Armenian alive and vital!” she exclaims to Basmajian’s evident surprise. Then on another podcast, while interviewing a young cultural worker with a small case of the nerves, she is supportive and guides her to the idea that dance terminology mirrors the linguistic.

Clearly Karapetian is a woman on a mission. As assistant director of the maverick University of Southern California (USC) Institute of Armenian Studies, she is part of a cutting-edge group of scholars, journalists, and media professionals who are changing the ways we perceive and interact with Armenian culture and language. Under the leadership of Salpi Ghazarian, since 2005 the USC team has encouraged new avenues

see LANGUAGE, page 14



Armenian Museum Of America Announces Online Programs for August

WATERTOWN — The Armenian Museum of America re-opened in June with revamped galleries of ancient and medieval artifacts, and two contemporary art exhibits in its Adele and Haig Der Manuelian Galleries. Although the museum is open, it will continue to offer virtual programming for members and patrons in other cities.

The sixth online concert, “Past Meets Present,” will be shown online on Thursday, August 19 at 7:30 p.m. EST (4:30 p.m. PST). The concert series is supported by a grant from the Dadourian Foundation and is curated by Konstantin Petrossian, artistic director, composer, and conductor.

The performance features the young *shvi* player David Harutyunyan and Levon Babayan on *dhol*, accompanied by pianist Lusine Karapetyan. The trio will perform traditional Armenian songs in a video recorded in Armenia exclusively for the museum.

“The museum adapted quickly during the temporary closure last year,” explains Executive Director Jason Sohigian. “We worked on two tracks, updating our galleries and developing a major series of online programs including this concert series and a monthly virtual exhibition highlighting objects in our collection. The response to the online and in-person material has been great so we hope to continue in both directions.”

The virtual concert is free and pre-registration is not required. It will be available on the museum’s website, Facebook page, and YouTube Channel.

The museum’s upcoming monthly virtual exhibition will highlight objects donated to its collection by Dr. Paul and Vicki Bedoukian and by Dr. Robert and Gail Bedoukian. The gallery of images with descriptions will be available online on Thursday, August 12, under the “Exhibitions” tab of its website.

“The museum is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, so we thought it would be fitting to share some of the artifacts donated by the Bedoukian Family,” adds Sohigian. “Our founder, Haig Der Manuelian, was persistent and methodical in the way he established the museum together with the other founding members. It wasn’t long until he gained the trust of the Bedoukians, who had become prominent collectors and researchers of Armenian artifacts, and they became leadership supporters and donors to the organization.”

The Armenian Museum has had many collections donors over the years, but perhaps none as committed to the development and mission of the museum as the Bedoukians. The family has donated thousands of items that are the core of its collection and many are currently on display.

The Armenian Museum of America is the largest Armenian museum see PROGRAMS, page 14



ARTS & CULTURE

Life Against Death: Pete Najarian's Mutual in Love Divine

NAJARIAN, from page 12

to Najarian's fiction, death acquires a unique prominence in this latest narrative. "After the Massacres" is an account of those in the narrator's family who survived, and those who did not survive, the death march and the slaughter. We learn of the "grandmother whose face his mother couldn't remember," and of uncle Boghos whose "grave is now somewhere in the rubble between Aleppo and Damascus and the bones in the Syrian desert."

"Archile Gorky was [my uncle's] age and held his mother in his arms when she starved to death," writes Najarian.

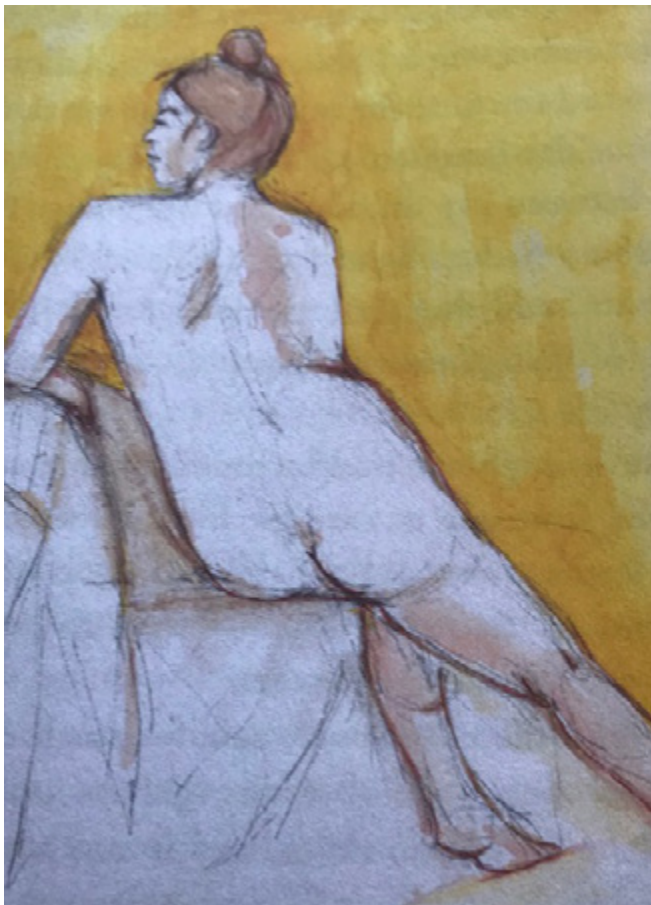
The narrator also recalls "falling in love with Saroyan's 'Darling Young Man on the Flying Trapeze' who starved to death like the suicides of . . ."

References to the deaths and the suicides of fellow artists and friends abound.

The story of life and death is nothing new. It is, in fact, "the same old story told even before writing was invented. Once upon a time, it said, there was life against death in a world of light and darkness." What is new in *Mutual in Love Divine* is the narrator's courage to confront his own darkness and to pose the ultimate question: "Why was the story always filled with suffering?" To "answer" the question requires digging deep into what is happening inside us, to "the part that makes us cry." The book lets out that cry and gives expression to, in Najarian's own words, "the primal scream and the sobbing."

The old sobbing "with an endless grief .

. . . from somewhere deeper than memory" is here to stay. Nonetheless, the mother's philosophy of family and love could be an antidote to the shocks and the hardships of life. Her 101 years of survival and endurance on this planet are evidence of it. Zaruhi loses her family on the death march. She survives her husband's stroke in an alien land (it is, after all, "alien registration cards" that immigrants to the United States are issued). Indeed, the good-natured woman keeps her son, "such a troubled and unhappy person most of my life," alive, uplifting him and nourishing both his life and his art.



Paintings by Pete Najarian

the *mutual love* of the two (italics mine) creates the warmth the son needs to relieve his loneliness. A substitute perhaps, but also testimony to the desire to "Awake, awake" from the shadows (Blake), and to let go of his sickness. In another episode, he draws "a thumbnail masterpiece in only a minute," of "a very cute" Asian boy who happened to be sitting opposite him at a little table at the library. "It was one of the highlights of my life," he writes, "since that

little boy was the grandchild I never had." Confronting the loneliness is vanquishing the alienation and the darkness.

The issue of life and death is complex and Najarian's narrative plays the tension between the two superbly. "Freud's Story" challenges the illustrious scientist's theory of the inevitability of wars and the ultimate self-destruction of mankind with the peasant illiterate mother's belief in the "sweetness of life."

Eternal Eros, the other human instinct put forward by Freud in his *Civilization And Its Discontent* — ironically, "Freud's greatest story" for the narrator — would master the instinct of aggression and stop the bombs and wars. The "good-natured and un-neurotic" mother — and there are millions like her — "would inherit the earth and hopefully save it."

Mutual in Love Divine may return one to one's own loneliness, but it does not invite despair. In some magical way, the beauty of Najarian's art — the beauty of his words and paintings of landscapes and nudes generously interspersed throughout — supersedes the sadness of life. The book is Najarian's gift to us. His "need to create" and to learn what art meant have made the telling of his tale possible. "I kept writing as if words would save me," he writes.

The story Pete Najarian writes is the story Freud "was writing in 1929 before the atom bomb and the mass extinctions of life on the planet," except that it now has Najarian's signature on it. "Once upon another time in the year after the bomb, a woman around forty walked home from the factory at day's end and climbed the three flights of stairs to the railroad rooms of the little apartment where her crippled husband sat on the small sofa between the stove and the kitchen window, her five-year old son playing with his toys on the linoleum and her sixteen-year old on his way home from his afternoon job at a soda jerk," is exquisite writing. *Mutual in Love Divine* is Najarian at his best.

Senekerim Khederian A Brief History of Nirze Village of Gesaria

translated from Armenian with annotations
and introduction by

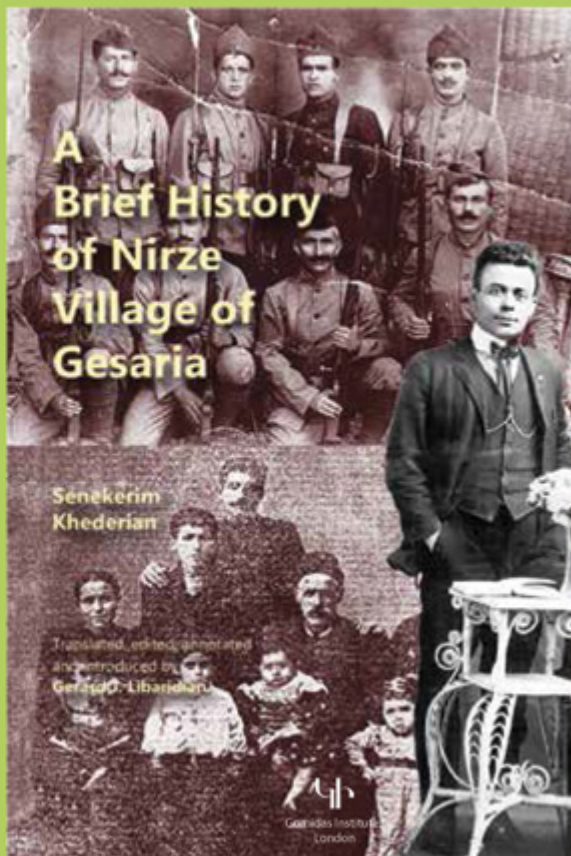
Gerard J. Libaridian

(London : Gomidas Institute, 2021), xiv + 90 pp., map, photos, tables,
ISBN 978-1-909382-66-4, pb., UK£16.00/US\$22.00

This work is the first Armenian compatriotic study that records the life of an Armenian community as a memorial to its existence in the wake of the Armenian Genocide of 1915. It was written in 1917 and published in 1918 when the destruction of Armenians was still in progress. It captures this critical, uncertain moment in Armenian history, as it relates what had been the life of Armenians in Nirze, in the Gesaria [Kayseri] plain of the Ottoman Empire. A significant part of the work focuses on the emigration of Armenians from Nirze to the United States, where the author, Senekerim Khederian, resided when writing this book.

A Brief History of Nirze Village in Gesaria (Համառոտ պատմություն Կեսարիոյ Նիրզէ գիւղի) has been expertly translated from the original Armenian and introduced with a critical introduction by Gerard J. Libaridian.

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ARTS & CULTURE

The Language Doctor Is In: Shushan Karapetian's Language Therapy

LANGUAGE, from page 12

of research, publications and public service, a combination think tank, digital media network and investigative journalism hub on all things Armenian.

Hence on another episode of “Language Therapy,” listeners are introduced to calligrapher extraordinaire Ruben Malayan to discuss the idea that the way a culture graphically represents its language and texts to the world is a key differentiator, in the Armenian case going back all the way to Mesrop Mashtots and our first scribes.

Before coming to USC, Karapetian completed both her undergraduate and graduate education at UCLA. She then held a dual position as associate director of the National Heritage Language Resource Center, and lecturer of Armenian Studies in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures. It was there that she developed an expertise on the role of Armenian as a “pluricentric heritage language,” while also focusing the intersection of language and identity in the Armenian transnation.

Her dissertation, “‘How Do I Teach My Kids My Broken Armenian?’: A Study of Eastern Armenian Heritage Language Speakers in Los Angeles,” was awarded the Distinguished Dissertation Award by the Society for Armenian Studies in 2015. Karapetian is also unique in the Armenian world in her eagerness to reach out beyond the walls of academia and apply her findings to effect concrete change — both within the community and in the broader world-at-large. These activities include leading a cutting-edge research partnership with the Glendale Unified School District's Dual Language Immersion Programs (in seven languages!) and collaborating with the Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation on Armenian Language Revitalization initiatives.

Karapetian's “Word of the Day” is another favorite of mine, and quite a few other Armenian linguistics nerds that I have spoken to of late. The concept is deceptively simple. But more than just translating words from Armenian into English (or vice-versa), Karapetian also provides such goodies as each word's etymological roots and formation. She also makes sure to provide both Eastern and Western Armenian variants for a word when they differ and asks her students leading questions such as: “How did your family say this word in Iran (or Armenia or Glendale)? Thus viewers have the option of simply writing down the translation of the word or delving into Ancient Iranian roots and how a word may have evolved over the centuries. Confession: this past year, I filled almost an entire 100-page notebook with new words-of-the day. Had my undergraduate institution hired someone as compelling as Dr. Karapetian to teach Armenian, I would have been fluent in Armenian long ago!! In the following interview, I ask Karapetian a few key questions about her career and the development of Armenian culture and language in the 21st century and beyond.

Christopher Atamian: Shushan, what is the origin of “Language Therapy with Doctor K” and what are its goals?

Shushan Karapetian: Given my academic background in Armenian Studies and research on heritage languages, I would constantly be approached by friends, family and often strangers with questions about language. Anything from: “how do I make sure my kids speak Armenian?” to “which Armenian is the right/best/better/purer one?”, to “my husband's accent is annoying me, what can I do?”, to “why do we not have a word for x?” etc... One day, it just

became obvious that these language issues had wide-reaching relevance for so many people. And they needed to be framed and communicated in a relatable, compassionate manner. At this point, I had been teaching Armenian Studies courses for nearly 15 years and had come to realize just how much healing was necessary to for the damage and painful associations so many had developed with Armenian. Hence the “therapy” component. It needed to have a cathartic element to help undo and understand a lot of the hurt, anxiety, sense of failure, and confusion. And to reintroduce the joy and playfulness of Armenian.

While the focus is on language in the Armenian context, I also want to drive home that so many of the phenomena we think are uniquely Armenian — whether they be “tragic” or “exceptional” or “mundane” — are not so unique. Language is a part of the human experience, and we are a part of the wider world. The dynamics that impact the Armenian experience are just as relevant for speakers of other languages and vice-versa.

AMS: Tell me a bit about your “word-of-the day.” I love that you get into etymology, synonyms and antonyms, and how different parts of the diaspora may use different terms to refer to the same thing. So refreshing.

SK: Again, this started organically. When I joined the team at the Institute, students found out that I was the “language expert” and would frequently pop into my office and say, “Shushan, how what's the English equivalent for this particular idiomatic phrase in Armenian?” I would step out of my office into the large, shared room where all our student workers sit and do a mini lesson on the white board. One day one of the students recorded it to share with a friend and Word of the Day was born!

I have several objectives with that series: 1) Make learning Armenian engaging! I want viewers to feel that engaging with Armenian is stimulating, witty, smart, and cool. 2) Normalize the Eastern/Western element without sensationalizing it. Celebrating the diversity, not lamenting it. 3) I also intentionally provide the etymology of the English word to demonstrate how easily and frequently English borrows and how enriching that is. It's a way to indirectly demonstrate to “purist” Armenians that borrowing is natural and normal!

AMS: What I like best about your podcasts is the obvious enthusiasm, energy and love for the Armenian language that you bring to them. How have your various podcasts been received? And who is your core audience? Have you received any surprising comments or feedback?

SK: The intended audience is wide and diverse. Everyone from the academic community at USC and at large, in all kinds of disciplines (Armenian Studies, Linguistics, Anthropology, Sociology, Diaspora Studies, Migration Studies, Bilingualism, Psychology, you name it. And everyone who is interested in smart conversations about language.

The reception has been overwhelmingly positive. From the very first episode, I've received private messages, phone calls, notes, and emails expressing listeners' excitement and relief that these topics are being broached in a constructive way. Language teachers and learners find comfort in shared difficulties and more importantly, renewed energy in innovative practices and solutions, and your average frustrated diaspora parent, who has been forcing their child to go to Saturday or Sunday school, at their wit's end saying thank you for making

me feel less guilty as a parent.

AMS: Can you once and for all explain the difference between Western and Eastern Armenian? Dialects? Different languages altogether at this point?

SK: Any time I teach an Armenian Studies class, I tell my students: if you get nothing else from my class, I want you to leave knowing the following:

Modern Armenian is a pluricentric language, with more than one standard version, without precluding the unity of the language. Think English in England, the U.S., Australia, India, and elsewhere; French in France, Canada, and elsewhere; you get the point. We of course have a third literary standard, Classical Armenian or *Grabar* (“literary”), but at this point it is only used as a liturgical language.

Eastern and Western Armenian are both equally beautiful, standardized, literary languages that make up modern Armenian. Neither is a dialect of Armenian, though we are blessed by the wealth of dialects we have. Neither is better/purer/older/more authentic/more right than the other.

Both were standardized at around the same time, by the second half of the 19th century, by intellectual elites, comprised of graduates from European universities, imbued with notions of romanticism, nationalism, and social progress, and aware of the need for a common, efficient, and purified language. The Armenian community in Constantinople became the vessel for the purification and standardization of Western Armenian. The formation of Modern Eastern Armenian had a more polycentric development, in important centers of learning such as the Lazarian Academy in Moscow and the Nersisian School in Tiflis, with the dialect of Ararat serving as the basis.

The two standards share a common vocabulary and similar rules of grammatical fundamentals, but also feature concrete phonetic, morphological, and structural differences. We all know that certain consonants sound different (p, u, q in Eastern Armenian are pronounced b, p, p' but reduced to p', b, and p' in western Armenian); verbs are conjugated differently (ես կը պարտւի vs. ես պարտուի եմ) etc... There is also the issue of orthography (spelling) as Armenia went through an orthographic reform during the Soviet period. So, we have two modern standards and two spelling systems.

How different are they and are they mutually comprehensible? If you have a solid foundation in one, have had some exposure to the other, and are open to accepting the other as part of YOUR literary heritage, you should not have a major problem. For English speakers in the U.S., think about reading the Economist (based in London) and seeing color spelled as *colour* or theater as *theatre* or hearing Brits say petrol instead of gas and loo instead of bathroom.

AMS: Is Western Armenian gaining a foothold in Armenia? Do you think that it will eventually also be taught in schools? As conversely, same question for Eastern Armenian in the Diaspora. Is a “hybrid” Armenian evolving in a place like Glendale today?

SK: In terms of the role of Western Armenian in Armenia, I would encourage your readers to listen to the episode with Vahakn Keshishian. This is precisely the topic of our discussion as we demonstrate that Western Armenian has always had a presence in Armenia, with Yerevan now functioning as one of the main intellectual and cultural hubs of Western Armenian literary and cultural production. Can Armenia do more? Absolutely. There are immense

opportunities with the waves of Syrian and Lebanese repatriates (diaspora repats in general) who bring immense linguistic and cultural knowledge with them. I would love to see Western Armenian incorporated in the national curriculum.

There is definitely a shift toward offering Eastern Armenian tracks in diaspora schools in parallel with Western Armenian.] As for a hybrid form of Armenian evolving in places like Glendale — I think in terms of your casual spoken vernacular, perhaps — it's common to hear Armenians having conversations that include features of both standards, without any discomfort. But in terms of a new literary variant, I don't see it yet.

AMS: Should the government of the Third Republic recognize Western Armenian as a second official language, in addition to Eastern Armenian?

SK: The constitution of the Republic of Armenia recognizes Armenian as the official language of the Republic. It does not specify Eastern Armenian; however, as we all know, Eastern Armenian with Reformed Orthography, functions as the de facto dominant language. Instead of recognizing Western Armenian as a second official language, it could use it in standard curricula, embracing it as part of the public linguistic; publishing more books, broadcasting more programs in Western Armenian.

AMS: Talk to us a bit about Armenian Bilingual Programs in the L.A. Public Schools. These are quite successful, I believe. Can these programs be extended to places like Detroit, Boston and NYC where other strong if smaller concentrations of Armenians also exist? Is funding the main issue?

SK: The establishment of Armenian-English Dual Immersion programs in public schools over the last decade (at both GUSD and LAUSD) has changed the educational landscape, both ideologically and practically. The main objective of these programs is to develop functional bilingualism and biliteracy along with academic language. In other words, Armenian is taught both for language acquisition and content instruction. Instead of Armenian used only for Armenian language, religion, and maybe history, children learn math, science, social studies, art, chemistry, and all their school subjects in both English and Armenian.

Dual-immersion programs in general in the US are highly successful. By the 4th grade, cohorts in dual immersion programs, who receive half their instruction in English and half their instruction in the target language (in our case Armenian) outperform their monolingual cohorts in math (this we all knew) but also English (this blows most people away). The reason? Because they have higher metalinguistic awareness!

AMS: French K-12 Lycées and “Écoles Bilingues,” for example, do a great job of producing graduates who are truly bilingual — many of whom have even become renowned writers and academics in France. Do you think that Armenian schools can achieve this same level of success?

SK: If Armenian schools adopt an immersion model as presented above with the right vision, it is certainly possible. Adopting a dual immersion model in Armenian schools is challenging for a number of reasons: 1) it requires strong and visionary leadership that positions Armenian as a prestigious, worthwhile language to discover the world; 2) it requires a cohort of well-trained and flexible teachers who

continued on next page



ARTS & CULTURE

from previous page
believe in the model; 3) it requires a cohort of parents who can put their own insecurities aside (immigrant complexes we all share) and embrace bilingualism as something essential for their child’s cognitive and social development; 4) it requires a community that invests in and prioritizes language as the main guarantor of cultural survival and vibrancy.

AMS: I imagine that textbooks are also an issue. The ones I used were simply dreadful — reading the phone book would have been more exciting, lol!

SK: Textbooks are certainly an issue. Imagine it from a child’s perspective. Colorful, multimedia curricular materials for their English language subjects compared to dull, outdated, black and white copied sheets for Armenian. The subliminal message is that Armenian is not sophisticated or prestigious or fun enough for colorful textbooks. This situation is of course changing. In most day schools, children have colorful, beautifully bound Armenian language textbooks. Where two tracks are offered, textbooks are adapted to support both standards. The issue now is to have textbooks outside of basic language acquisition to support content in Armenian (math/science/ social studies/etc.). The dual-immersion programs adapt textbooks from Armenia to make sure they are age appropriate/context appropriate/and proficiency appropriate.

AMS: Shushan, what is the ideal role of Armenian Studies programs at the university level? How are we doing on that score and what could we do to improve them?

one full-time chair position, requiring a senior scholar. We do not, however, have the infrastructure, that turns new PhDs into senior scholars with post-docs, assistant and associate professorships, junior scholar positions, etc. This is something we need to work on.

AMS: Okay, so I have to discuss your Mary Basmajian episode — she kills me! Vartoush Totah—“*hasd vorig Vartoush* — I completely agree that she is doing crucial work — half my Armenian sex vocabulary comes from her show. I think she is helping a generation to get over the shame in Armenian society associated with sex and their bodies. I mean have you ever heard a Armenian talk sex over kebab or give love making advice over *baklava* and *surj*?

SK: Or teach the alphabet using curse words — that’s the premise of her Vulgar Vocabulary series! Again, this goes back to decompartmentalizing Armenian. So many of us have grown up with a compartmentalized perspective of our languages. English/French/Russian [insert dominant language here] are appropriate for all topics while Armenian is ok for some (church, family, genocide, grandparents) but not for others (sex, abstract ideas, higher learning, technology, cool/fun stuff etc.) Mary breaks those artificial boundaries while making you laugh and having a great time while at it. She is also breaking gender boundaries (a woman cursing!). Mary and a generation of comedians are doing excellent work, snapping us out of this limited worldview of our language.

AMS: Until recently there was a real and perhaps justified fear that this might be

I’ve noticed an unprecedented interest in Armenian, particularly Western Armenian Look at Aghvor Paner (aghvorpaner.com), look at the London Institute of Armenian Studies, social media pages and *ToTalk Armenian* (www.totalkArmenian.com) and dasa2.com. Here, one has to highlight the amazing work and support of the Gulbenkian Foundation. What they are doing in supporting the cultivation of Western Armenian is a game changer.

AMS: Do you also write creatively? Any comments or new projects on the horizon that we should know about?

SK: I write creatively all the time, non-stop, but unfortunately only in my mind! It very rarely makes its way to paper or the screen. I used to write creatively in college, but then academic work and life took over. The joke in our household is that this will be my retirement project!

I am actually working on a very exciting project now. It is a very nuanced look at the

Armenian language, from an angle we are not typically accustomed to seeing it from. The short version is that I am exploring the language of masculinity. In my research on Armenian as a heritage language, particularly in the LA communities, I noticed that there is one domain in which Armenian reigns as the ultimate dominant/prestigious language. Among urban male youth in LA, speaking/using Armenian is a powerful means of displaying one’s machoness, projecting one’s prowess. I am investigating and documenting the visual and linguistic codes of this segment of our communities, whether it’s the tattoos on their bodies or their preferences for colloquial vernaculars. Decoding the detail of urban youth’s visual and spoken language tells us much about their priorities, preoccupations, and passions. It’s a kind of coming-of-age exploration for Armenian urban youth, with an interesting focus on the intersection of language and masculinity.

AMS: Thank you Shushan!



Dr. Shushan Karapetian gives an interview to CivilNet reporter Rita Manjikian in Yerevan

SK: The role of Armenian Studies programs at the university level is huge. It is to make sure that the Armenian experience is integrated into the world experience and that the world is integrated into the Armenian reality. The field has been making immense strides in this direction. It is no longer Armenians doing Armenian Studies for Armenians but scholars at large taking an interest in the Armenian experience because it enriches world knowledge. We have cutting edge scholarship coming out from some of the best universities in the world. The biggest challenging facing Armenian Studies at the moment isn’t the lack of scholarship or the excellence of that scholarship but developing a pipeline for these scholars so that they have fruitful career opportunities. We have a handful of Armenian Studies programs, most with

the last generation to write and publish in Western Armenian — people like Zahrad and Krikor Beledian and Vahe Berberian. But lo and behold we now have a new generation that has consciously decided to keep literary Western Armenian alive. I am thinking of Christian Batakian in Istanbul/Paris for example, and people like Jesse Arlen in Los Angeles, who learned Armenian in college and now writes gorgeous Armenian poetry and prose. Is this a renewal or the dying throes of Western Armenian?

SK: I think this is a renewal. All the names you mentioned are cultivators of Armenian, who have the freedom to create in a playful, free, contemporary Armenian, unshackled from the label of an endangered language focused on preservation. Interestingly, during the pandemic

CALENDAR

ON-LINE EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

The Armenian Heritage Park is hosting a series of events this summer.

August 22 at 7:30pm UNDER THE BLUE MOON Meet & Greet Enjoy Black Sea Salsa Combo RSVP hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

September 9 at 10am CELEBRATING WHAT UNITES US! All About Grains, virtually with Oldways RSVP hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

September 19 at 2pm SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT THE PARK! Meet & Greet Enjoy Hye Guys Ensemble RSVP hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

AUGUST 19 — Armenian Museum Save the date! The sixth Online Concert is coming up on Thursday, featuring, David Harutyunyan (shvi) Lusine Karapetyan (piano). The concert will be shown online at 7:30 pm EST (4:30 pm PST). This concert series is supported by the Dadourian Foundation and is curated by Maestro Konstantin Petrossian, artistic director, composer, and conductor. It is free, open to the public, and pre-registration is not required.

AUGUST 21-22 — Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Picnic Two Day Event. Saturday 12 – 5 pm and Sunday 12-5 pm. Live music on Sunday with the fabulous Jason Naroian Ensemble. Menu includes Lamb Shish, Losh & Chicken Kebab, Kheyma, Pastries and Beverages. Cash raffles and cooking demonstrations for Armenian Lavash & Jingalov Hatz. Air Conditioned Hall. Bring your lawn chairs for sitting outside. For more info visit www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org or call (978) 372-9227. 1280 Boston Road, Haverhill

NEW JERSEY

AUGUST 22 — Ardashad Tahlij and Shooshanig Otyag of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan (Philadelphia Chapters) annual TAVLOO TOURNAMENT AND PICNIC on Sunday, 3 to 6 p.m., Battlefield Park, 100 Hessian Avenue, National Park, New Jersey 08063. Cost is \$15 (kids under 12 free) – register through our secured PayPal account: PHILLYKOV5@GMAIL.COM or contact Gerald Najarian (najarian@remgrp.com 609-933-3990) or Gabrielle Meranshian (gabriellemeranshian@gmail.com 856-725-2260). Battlefield Park is a beautiful waterfront park with walking trails and playgrounds for the children. This event helps us publicize our charitable and service endeavors in the local and national Armenian communities.

NOVEMBER 13 — Save the Date: Saturday. 12 Vocations, Fulfilling the Promise of St. Nersess Seminary. Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary and the vocations of the first 12 priests who graduated from St. Nersess and St. Vladimir’s Seminaries and were ordained. This is the first in a series of events to recognize the alumni of St. Nersess, both ordained and lay, who are in service to the Armenian Church, in any capacity. The celebratory dinner will be held at the Old Tappan Manor in Old Tappan, N.J. For more info, go to www.stnersess.edu.

RHODE ISLAND

AUGUST 21 — Saints Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church, 70 Jefferson St, Providence, ARMENIAN FESTIVAL “Picnic” 12:00 – 6:00 pm Featuring: The Mugrditchian Band, Greg Krikorian - Oud and vocals, Kevin Magarian - Guitar and vocals, Arthur Chingris – Dumbek, Special Guest Artist: Mal Barsamian on Clarinet, Live Music, Dancing and Delicious Foods. Performance by the Nazali Dance Group, Mister Twister, the Balloon Man, Variety of Pastry available at the Festival. Pre-paid orders to be made at: <https://tinyurl.com/2021STSAHFest> Or order by calling the church at: 401-272-7712. Order By Wednesday, August 18 to Guarantee Meals



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



Joumana Accad's Turnip Greens Salad

A native of Lebanon, Joumana is a trained pastry chef and professional caterer. In her celebrated cookbook, *Taste of Beirut*, she shares her heritage through exquisite food and family anecdotes, teaching anyone how to master traditional Lebanese cuisine. Published in 2014 by Health Communications, Inc. (US), her cookbook has enjoyed to date the largest number of independent five-star reviews from their roster of cookbooks, and is available online through Amazon and other sites as well as in major bookstores in Lebanon. "Taste of Beirut began as a blog in 2009 and its main purpose was to share my beloved Lebanese heritage with the world through recipes, anecdotes, and cultural tidbits," says Joumana.

With over 150 recipes inspired by her beloved grandmother, Accad captures the well-known and healthy flavors of the Middle East and makes them completely accessible to home cooks everywhere, like this popular Turnip Greens Salad. "This is a cooked salad," she says, "made in Lebanon with dandelion greens (wild or farm-grown) called hindbeh. I decided to make it with turnip greens instead, because dandelion greens in the US are not comparable to the ones in Lebanon (in the US, their stems are tougher and the leaves are narrower); the turnip greens on the other hand are readily available, have wide leaves and taste great."

INGREDIENTS:

2 large bunches of turnip greens (or other greens)
1/2 cup olive oil (more as needed)
2 large onions, one chopped fine, and the other sliced into rings; sprinkle salt on the onion rings and set aside.
1 tablespoon garlic paste (6 garlic cloves mashed with salt)
1/3 cup barberries (optional, or can be replaced by golden raisins), rinsed under running tap water before using
1 teaspoon raw sugar (or regular sugar, optional)
1/2 cup pine nuts
1 package cheese such as halloumi or a similar cheese (Joumana uses a Mexican cheese widely available in Texas at various supermarkets)

PREPARATION:

After washing the greens thoroughly, cut them into wide strips and boil them quickly in a pot of salted water for about 2 minutes until softened. Dunk them into a bowl of ice water, and remove them from the bowl and squeeze them dry. Set them aside on a cutting board.

Heat oil in a skillet and fry the onion rings until browned; remove and drain on paper towels.

Now fry the chopped onion for a few minutes until it gets golden-brown; add the barberries and fry for a couple minutes, sprinkling the mixture with a teaspoon of raw sugar. Add the pine nuts and stir-fry until they get golden. Add chopped greens and mashed garlic and stir-fry for a couple minutes. Set aside in a serving dish.

Add a few tablespoons of oil to the skillet (if needed) and fry the cheese on both sides until golden. Transfer cheese chunks onto the serving platter. Serve immediately with cheese chunks and topped with the onion rings.

Serves 4-6.

NOTES FROM JOUMANA:

- It is customary to serve lemon quarters with this dish, to squeeze on top, if desired.
- I always add the garlic at the end to preserve its pungent flavor; however, here it can be added right after browning the onions.
- The onion rings can be sprinkled with salt prior to frying to make them purge their juice (and get them crispier when fried).
- The pine nuts can be fried ahead (or toasted) and added at the last minute.
- The greens can be boiled or steamed a day ahead as well and fried right before serving with the other ingredients.

"In Lebanon, this dish is a popular one for a mezze, but can be served as a light meal in the home (perfect with a side of fried cheese). If you prefer to use dandelion greens or other greens (radish, beet, Swiss chard, mustard, spinach, or kale), go for it. In this salad, the greens are coated with olive oil and taste rich and mellow. It is served at room temperature for a mezze, but I prefer it slightly warmed-up as a light dinner," adds Joumana.

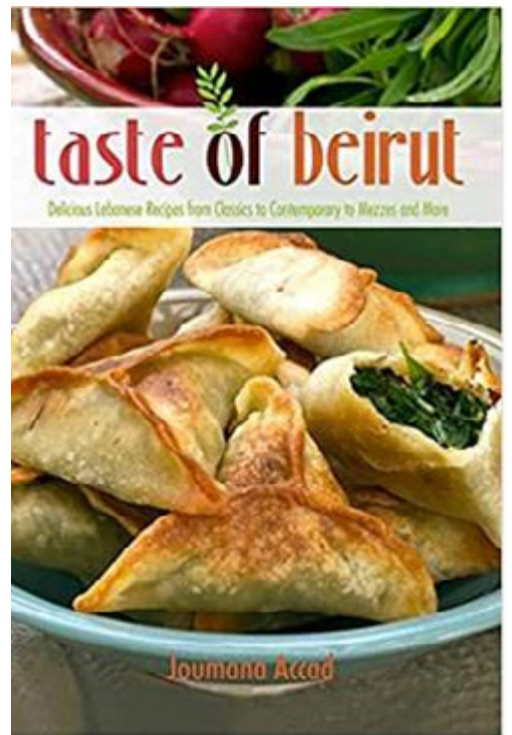
For this recipe, go to: <https://www.tasteofbeirut.com/turnip-greens-salad/#recipe>

ORDER TODAY: *Taste of Beirut*: 175+ Delicious Lebanese Recipes from Classics to Contemporary to Mezzes and More Paperback – September 2, 2014. Take a culinary journey to the Middle East with Taste of Beirut without leaving the kitchen. Go to: <https://www.amazon.com/Taste-Beirut-Delicious-Lebanese-Contemporary/dp/0757317707>.

Joumana Accad, creator of the blog *TasteOfBeirut.com*, is a native Lebanese, a trained pastry chef, and professional caterer. In her debut cookbook, the *Taste of Beirut*, she shares her heritage through exquisite food and anecdotes, teaching anyone from newbies to foodies how to master traditional Lebanese cuisine. With over 175+ recipes inspired by her Teta (grandmother) in their family's kitchen, Accad captures the fabulous flavors of the Middle East and makes them completely accessible to home cooks.

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Armenian Museum of America Announces Online Programs for August

PROGRAMS, from page 12

in the diaspora. It has grown into a major repository for all forms of Armenian material culture that illustrate the creative endeavors of the Armenian people over the centuries. Today, its collections hold more than 25,000 artifacts, including

5,000 ancient and medieval Armenian coins, 1,000 stamps and maps, 3,000 textiles, and 180 Armenian inscribed rugs.

In addition to more than 30,000 books in the Mesrop G. Boyajian Research Library, there is an extensive collection of Urartian and religious artifacts, ceramics, medieval illuminations, and various other objects. The collection includes historically significant objects, including five of the Armenian Bibles printed in Amsterdam in 1666. The Museum is open Fridays through Sundays from noon to 6 p.m.



Shvi player David Harutyunyan, pianist Lusine Karapetyan, and percussionist Levon Babayan are featured in the Armenian Museum of America's online concert

THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

SINCE 1932



An ADL Publication

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE
ARMENIAN WEEKLY IN THE
UNITED STATES

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The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is
published weekly, except two weeks in
July and the first week of the year, by:

Baikar Association, Inc.

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA
02472-1509

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

U.S.A.	\$80 one year
Canada	\$125 one year
Other Countries	\$200 one year

© 2014 The Armenian Mirror-Spectator
Periodical Class Postage Paid at Boston,
MA and additional mailing offices.

ISSN 0004-234X

**Postmaster: Send address
changes to The Armenian
Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount
Auburn St.,
Watertown, MA 02472**

**Other than the Editorial, views
and opinions expressed in this
newspaper do not necessarily
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publisher.**

COMMENTARY

Editorial

What Was the Cause behind the Charade in Armenia's Parliament?



By Edmond Y.
Azadian

I spent the entire month of June in Armenia. Back home, when friends ask me how I found Armenia, I cannot help but make an analogy by saying, "People are at the last dance on the Titanic."

Before arriving there, I anticipated seeing gloom and doom all around, with some of the 5,000 losses not even buried yet, the other 10,000 injured pinning their hopes on prostheses, and everyone listening to the news about daily incursions of Azerbaijani forces across Armenia's borders.

However, the contrast was so bewildering that I could not come up with a rational explanation. Either people have become so fatalistic that nothing that happens scares them anymore, or they are so resilient that they are facing adversities with courage and hope. A third possibility is that they know something that we outsiders don't, but it may also be any combination of the above.

Armenia's political life, particularly within the parliament, reflects the very same divide, pitting domestic political unrest versus the reality right outside the country's borders.

Polarization runs deep; objectivity has lost its meaning and relevance in Armenia's political world. That polarization is also reflected when it comes to views of the diaspora.

that the struggle would continue until the ruling party was defeated.

Then the parliament became the scene for a show where the opposition members were wearing t-shirts with the pictures of their fellow elected members emblazoned on them, because the latter had been incarcerated on charges of violating election laws. After kindergarten-style enthusiastic clapping, the opposition members left the parliament in a showy manner; someone unfamiliar with the country's situation could not have guessed that this was the legislative chamber of a country in trouble.

The election results handed 71 seats out of 107 to Pashinyan's Civil Contract party, 29 to Kocharyan's Hayastan alliance and 7 seats to Serzh Sargsyan's Pativ Unem [I Have Honor] alliance, headed by former security chief Artur Vanetzryan.

The constitution mandates that one of the deputy speakers represent the opposition. The selection of that deputy also further fueled the carnival atmosphere with the participation of war hero and former minister of defense, Seyran Ohanyan, who has proved to be one of the country's most sophisticated military leaders.

Following the elections, Kocharyan dropped his mandate, decapitating the opposition. The majority of opposition votes were cast for Kocharyan, who is rumored to have invested large sums in his election campaign. But with Kocharyan absent from



For example, you cannot congratulate Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on his reelection, wishing him and his team well in governing Armenia, and then dare to criticize him if he blunders in a foreign policy matter. If you are with him, or his opponent, Robert Kocharyan, you have to believe that your hero is infallible; in fact, politics have been transformed into a religion and anyone outside your faith is considered a heathen.

One may wonder how a country so divided can stand together and survive.

The charade that took place in Armenia's parliament last week illustrates this division colorfully. August 2 was the date when the eighth session of the parliament was opened to elect the speaker and his deputies, along with the leaders of the parliament standing committees.

The opposition had come to the parliament to disrupt its normal functioning and one of its leaders, Ishkhan Saghatelyan, who later became the opposition candidate for the position of deputy speaker, did not hide that intention and announced

the scene, the baton was passed to Saghatelyan, the organizer of the 17-party opposition movement headed by former Premier Vazgen Manukyan, which fizzled within a few weeks.

Saghatelyan also represented the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), which, though it has one of the best-organized political machines, never crossed the 1.5-percent bar in the elections.

In a way, Kocharyan ceded his position to Saghatelyan, bypassing Seyran Ohanyan, who became the head of the opposition faction. Many who had voted for Kocharyan did not intend to support Saghatelyan or his party.

This worked out well for Pashinyan too, as the ruling party was not displeased to see a streetwise candidate who lacked political finesse be elected as deputy speaker from the opposition. The behavior and actions of the opposition were embarrassing, to say the least.

But turning the tables, the ruling party has to share the blame see CHARADE, page 19



COMMENTARY

Why a Turkish Dictator Let Himself Lose an Election

By Nicholas Danforth

Would President Recep Tayyip Erdogan actually allow himself to lose an election? And could pressure from Turkey's Western allies help ensure that he does? These are two of the most pressing questions confronting Turkish political commentators in the years leading up to Turkey's 2023 presidential elections. They also mirror the still unanswered questions surrounding the origins of Turkish democracy 71 years ago. Looking back on this history doesn't offer any certain predictions about the future, but it can help better frame the stark challenge Turkey is facing today.

In 1950, just a decade or so after he inherited uncontested authoritarian rule from Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, Turkish President Ismet Inonu beat back opposition within his own government to hold free, multiparty elections. He expected to win. When he didn't, he dismissed offers from his security services to reverse the result and simply stepped down. In the immediate aftermath of World War II, with fascist dictatorships ruling the Iberian Peninsula and Communist dictatorships ruling Eastern Europe, this act of liberal statesmanship appeared truly remarkable. Indeed, it may have appeared all the more remarkable to those who had experienced the brutality of Inonu's policies — whether Kurdish villagers who lived through the 1938 Dersim massacre or Istanbul Christians who had been exiled after failing to pay a confiscatory wealth tax in 1942.

Erdogan has always been unrelenting in his criticism of Inonu, calling him both a drunk and a fascist, and drawing attention to the undeniable Hitler mustache he wore for a number of years. For Erdogan, Inonu represents the worst of the Kemalist regime — all its authoritarianism and secularism without the heroic and patriotic aura of Mustafa Kemal himself. Moreover, the personal contrast between the two men is striking. Erdogan is tall, charismatic and proudly provincial; Inonu was short, hard of hearing and seen by many of his European peers as a savvy and sophisticated statesman.

Inonu came to power as a dictator and left as a Democrat. After coming to power as a Democrat, Erdogan is now on the reverse trajectory. The next few years will determine whether Erdogan will ultimately display the best or the worst qualities of the man he hates.

Washington to the Rescue?

Neither liberal academics nor Erdogan supporters credit the US government with a great deal of sincerity when it comes to supporting democracy in the Middle East. So it is surprising that so many members of both groups largely agree US pressure was a central factor in Turkey's democratization. This shared assumption, which can be traced all the way back to the 1950s, reflects widespread amazement at the dramatic and otherwise inexplicable transformation that occurred in Turkey at the outset of the Cold War. It is also a tribute to the enduring hostility Erdogan and many of his followers feel toward Inonu that they are willing to give Washington the benefit of the doubt in order to deny him credit for his most principled achievement.

Turkey's democratic transition occurred at the outset of its alliance with the United States, at a moment when Ankara was desperately trying to secure membership in NATO as a guarantee against the Soviet Union. Democracy was central to US rhetoric during this period and "free institutions" were specifically cited in Article 2 of NATO. In this idealistic context, seeing a causal relationship between US values and Inonu's actions made sense. Moreover, Washington was perfectly happy to take its share of the credit. Turkey's Democratic Party, which came to power in 1950, was also happy to perpetuate the idea that it enjoyed the support of the country's new superpower ally.

And yet, the closer you look, the harder it is to believe that the United States really deserves credit for Turkey's turn toward democracy. Declassified State Department records from the period provide little evidence of US policymakers pressuring Ankara to democratize, and ample circumstantial evidence suggesting that Inonu knew he could have had both one-man rule and US support if he had wanted. Which in turn raises the more elusive, and perhaps unanswerable question, of why he ultimately made the decision that put Turkey on its real if tortuous path to democracy.

'A Strongman of the Right Sort'

In 1947, President Harry S. Truman called on Congress to provide aid to Turkey and Greece in order to help both countries resist the threat of Soviet expansion. In his speech, which became the basis of the Truman Doctrine, he described Greece, with several caveats, as an imperfect democracy. Turkey, by contrast, was "an independent and economically sound state" whose future was "important to the freedom-loving peoples of the world."

Indeed, at the end of World War II, the reigning US attitude toward Inonu was perhaps best characterized by the description of Ataturk in a contemporary guide for US soldiers: "Many accused him of being a dictator. If so, he was a strong man of the right sort." When the US-Turkish relationship began, this was the status quo US officials assumed would continue indefinitely, and they did not seem unduly perturbed by it. Moreover, when Portugal, under the Salazar dictatorship, became a founding member of NATO in 1948, Inonu had every reason to believe his government was democratic enough for the Western alliance as well.

But even assuming Inonu would have been susceptible to US pressure, Washington never gave him a chance to feel it. Finding evidence of absence is difficult, but US State Department records from 1945 to 1950 have not, so far, divulged any examples of US officials actually trying to convince their Turkish counterparts that free or fair elections were necessary to secure American backing. To the contrary, on one of the few occasions the subject came up, officials of the Republican People's Party (CHP) appeared remarkably confident in their position.

In December 1948, a member of the US military mission discussed with Naci Perkel, head of the Turkish National Security Service, rumors that the United States had abandoned Chiang Kai-shek because of his undemocratic behavior. The American colonel drew Perkel's attention to "remarks by some of the Turkish opposition members that the United States would realize that Turkey is also not democratic and would take similar action here to withdraw US aid."

"Naci's response," the colonel reported, "was to laugh and say that since aid is still coming in, the US evidently is convinced that Turkey is democratic." Perkel then went on to explain that "Turkey could not be democratic until the level of education is much higher, and such a condition is many, many years away."

When Turkey's parliamentary elections were scheduled for May 1950, State Department officials and CIA analysts largely expected Inonu to once again use ballot rigging and intimidation at the polls to achieve victory. Tellingly, in private conversations with Inonu about US-Turkish cooperation in the months before the elections, US participants made it clear they expected relations to continue apace.

Nine Foxes, No Clear Answers

So if America did not force Inonu's hand, what prompted him to take a step that countless dictators have promised but all too few have actually followed through with? And can this tell us anything about the prospects for democratic change in Turkey today?

Ismet Inonu was described as a man with "nine foxes running about inside his head" whose "tails did not even touch." Perhaps to truly understand his motives it would have been necessary to ask the foxes. But a few observations seem relevant.

As an individual, Inonu earned a reputation for embracing the Kemalist project with greater personal sincerity than many of his fellow revolutionaries. One story involves him listening to classical music records in his tent while on a campaign in order to teach himself to enjoy them. Another involves Ataturk's companions, who continued to use the Ottoman script in private after the 1928 alphabet reform, hiding their handwritten notes in embarrassment on hearing Inonu approaching. It is possible that, at a personal level, he also took Kemalist rhetoric about democracy more seriously, and was more prepared to make real sacrifices in service of it.

More importantly, Turkey's democratic change was also facilitated by the considerable political and ideological continuity it belied. Celal Bayar, who replaced Inonu as president, had also served, like Inonu, as Ataturk's prime minister. (Democratic Party newspapers were happy to remind readers of this by printing pictures of Ataturk and Bayar together on every appropriate occasion.) Adnan Menderes, like the other founders of the Democratic Party, had been a parliamentarian in Inonu's government during the '40s.

Famously, before giving Bayar and Menderes permission to create a new party, Inonu asked for assurances that they would continue to support his government's anti-Soviet foreign policy and defend the principle of secularism. And — as minority voters who supported the Democrats seeking respite from the CHP's heavy-handed nationalism soon discovered — the new government proved eager to preserve some of the most problematic aspects of Kemalist nationalism as well.

Certainly, it must have been easier for Inonu to hand power to a government made up of men who broadly shared his vision for the country and who had served by his side in both war and peace. But again, these factors have seldom been enough to convince other dictators they can comfortably surrender control.

Years later, Inonu was asked by an American social scientist whether he had held elections in response to US pressure. He responded to the effect that, regardless of the reason, it had nevertheless been the right decision. Looking back today, this may be the best verdict possible.

What Now?

Could the same thing happen today? The circumstances in Turkey in 2021 are so different as to make comparisons difficult. On the positive side, Erdogan, despite his best efforts, does not enjoy the same degree of consolidated authoritarian power Inonu did. Seven decades of competitive elections have also created powerful public expectations, which even previous military juntas ultimately deferred to. As a result, the choice of whether to honor election results may not be entirely Erdogan's own, as it was for Inonu.

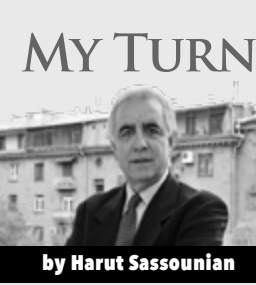
If it is, though, neither the similarities nor differences with 1950 are particularly encouraging. The United States remains rhetorically committed to democracy. But the limits of this rhetoric were already apparent in the 1950s, and decades of US support for Middle Eastern dictatorships now make it all the more difficult for any leader to believe free elections are a requirement for good ties with Washington. Like Inonu, Erdogan clearly shares a broadly nationalist worldview with many of his political opponents. But his unrelenting efforts to demonize them as traitors and enemies of the nation mean that this is unlikely to play the same positive role that it did during the early Cold War.

In 1950, a man with well-honed authoritarian instincts displayed an unexpected and historically exceptional commitment to democracy. Despite the relatively conducive domestic and international circumstances of the time, this was impossible to predict and remains hard to explain even now. It can only be hoped, in the absence of any compelling historical grounds for optimism, that the man running Turkey today might behave in an equally unexpected way.

(This commentary originally appeared on the news website Al-Monitor on August 6.)



COMMENTARY



MY TURN

Greek Foreign Minister Makes Excuses for Ambassador’s Propaganda Tour of Shushi

by Harut Sassounian

The Armenian National Committee of Greece sent a letter to the Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias complaining about the Greek Ambassador’s propaganda tour of occupied Shushi, orchestrated by the government of Azerbaijan. The Foreign Minister responded by making lame excuses for the Ambassador’s appalling behavior.

Here is what the ANC of Greece wrote to Foreign Minister Dendias on July 12: “We were surprised but also very upset to learn about the participation of the Ambassador of Greece to Azerbaijan, Mr. Nikolaos Piperigkos, in the provocative celebration organized by the Aliyev regime.... The Armenian National Committee, as well as the Armenian Community of Greece as a whole, express their strong dissatisfaction with the participation of the representative of our country in this parody. You know very well that Azerbaijan, by faithfully copying its mentor [Turkey], is grossly violating the rules of international law. What is the purpose of the support provided by Greece at this critical time?”

Foreign Minister Dendias replied on July 27: “Greece maintains long-standing excellent historical and friendly relations with Armenia. In difficult times for Armenia, Greece stood by the country and its people. I myself visited Yerevan on October 16, 2020, when hostilities in the Nagorno-Karabakh region were still ongoing, sending a message of solidarity. Also, responding to the request of the Armenian organizations in our country with the coordination of the International Development Cooperation Agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece carried out two humanitarian aid missions (medical supplies and food) on December 12, 2020 and January 8, 2021, displaying practical assistance. At the same time, as is known, Greece has maintained diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan since 1992. After the crisis in bilateral relations [between Azerbaijan and Greece] in autumn 2020, the Greek Ambassador returned to Baku, where in the framework of his duties, he maintains contacts with the country he is accredited to and follows closely local developments. In addition, considering the circumstance of our country’s membership in the European Union, the Embassy coordinates its activities with our partners. For this reason too, the acceptance of the invitation of the Azeri Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Greek Ambassador, after six negative responses to continuous similar invitations, which were already accepted by other European Embassies, is in no way an endorsement of views or recognition of actions of the host state, much less ‘participating in celebrations.’ It was carried out with the coordination of [EU] Member States with the purpose of on-site observation and recording

what was happening to transfer accurate information to the Foreign Ministry.”

Here are the problems with the Foreign Minister’s reply:

1) He does not seem to understand that by appeasing a hostile nation the Ambassador’s actions are undermining Greece’s own interests as well as those of Armenia.

2) Azerbaijan is no friend of Greece. As the Foreign Minister recalled in his letter, last September, during the Greek Ambassador’s presentations of his credentials, President Aliyev told him in an inappropriate and undiplomatic manner: “I can tell you, and it is no secret, that Turkey is not only our friend and partner, but also a brotherly country for us. Without any hesitation whatsoever, we support Turkey and will support it under any circumstances. We support them [Turkey] in all issues, including the issue in the Eastern Mediterranean.”

3) The Foreign Minister stated in his letter that other European countries also accepted the Azeri invitation. He ignored the fact that several other major European countries, including Great Britain, Germany, France, Portugal, Spain and the Czech Republic, in addition to Russia and the United States, refused to participate in the Azeri propaganda tour of Shushi. Greece should have done likewise!

4) The Foreign Minister’s excuse that the Greek Ambassador’s visit to Shushi was to provide on-site observation is ridiculous. The Greek Ambassador was simply duped into participating in a charade orchestrated by Azerbaijan to boast about the occupation and destruction of a historic Armenian region, its people and religious sites in violation of international law.

The Greek Foreign Minister correctly mentioned the friendship between Greece and Armenia. Such friendship, however, must go beyond empty statements. It has to be shown by concrete actions, not mere words.

As I wrote in my previous article, the Greek Foreign Minister must immediately dispatch his ambassador in Yerevan to Stepanakert, the Capital of the Republic of Artsakh, to atone for his Baku counterpart’s offensive visit to Shushi. If not, the ANC of Greece and the local Armenian community must have an immediate meeting with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, and demand that he immediately fire the Foreign Minister and recall the Ambassador from Azerbaijan.

By obeying the instructions of President Aliyev, the Greek Ambassador betrayed not only Armenia, but also the interests of Greece. Instead of joining ranks with Armenia and other friendly nations against Azerbaijan and Turkey, Greece is alienating its own allies.

I am still waiting for the Prime Minister of Armenia to organize for the foreign ambassadors stationed in Yerevan a tour of Stepanakert, the Capital of the Republic of Artsakh, to counter the visit to Shushi arranged by Azerbaijan. To do this, however, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan must first appoint a Foreign Minister.



ADL SUPREME COUNCIL

CONGRATULATES

PM NIKOL PASHINYAN

His Excellency Nikol Pashinyan
Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia
Yerevan, Armenia

Dear Mr. Pashinyan,

Please accept our congratulations on your assumption of the position of prime minister of Armenia.

All of us as a nation realize that you and the entire cadre of your government have taken upon yourselves responsibilities at one of the most critical moments in the history of our homeland. The carrying out of this duty requires pan-national cooperation in order to overcome the challenges facing our land.

The focus of our nation goes beyond ideological, theological and political labels to ensuring the preservation of the existence of our homeland, and its strengthening and prosperity. Together with every patriotic and responsible Armenian, we come to gather around you and direct our gaze at a promising future.

The diaspora stands at your side with in spirit and in deed.

With love for the homeland, with sorrow for the homeland, and with hope for the homeland, we wish you success.

Armenian Democratic Liberal Party
Supreme Council
Boston
August 4, 2021

What Was the Cause behind the Charade in Armenia’s Parliament?

CHARADE, from page 17

for having provided an excuse for the opposition’s conduct.

Following the elections, Pashinyan’s ruling party had promised to use the iron fist of the law, which many voters welcomed. We had warned that if that decision was applied universally, it would help the country to recover at least internally but if that fist was used selectively, which had been a hallmark of former regimes, then it would lead the country toward disaster. Unfortunately, the latter was practiced, causing turmoil.

Two candidates who were running on the opposition slate and were duly elected did not show up in the parliament because they were in jail, accused of violating election rules. Those were Mekhitar Zakaryan and Artur Sargsyan. Two other mayors were also incarcerated for the same charges.

Earlier, Dr. Armen Charchyan was detained for the same reason. Incidentally, Dr. Charchyan runs a hospital owned and operated by Holy Echmiadzin, with whose leader, Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, Pashinyan and his teammates have an ax to grind.

All these accusations and court cases would have been justified if the law was applied to everyone equally.

Indeed, there is a solid case in Vanadzor which is being overlooked, because the culprits are Pashinyan’s cronies. There, a nurse, Armine Poghosyan, with an impeccable record of professional performance, has been asked by her superior to resign, because she ran for parliament as an opposition candidate. Ms. Poghosyan claims that the hospital’s acting director told her that the governor of Lori Province asked her to quit her job. She said he threatened to sue her if she were to reject the demand. The accusation was verified by the party delivering the threat, yet no one was held accountable, as Lori is under the control of Civil Contract.

These kinds of inequities play into the hands of the opposition.

On the other hand, the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) has drafted legislation to purge Armenia’s courts. The SJC is headed by a controversial former prosecutor named Gagik Jahangiryan, who said in a recent story in Azatutyun, “Those people who have committed crimes against justice must definitely be purged.”

This law also is intended to be used to eliminate judges who do not fall in line with the ruling party’s policies.

Incidentally, it was reported in the press that “Jahangiryan himself was at odds with human rights activists when he served as Armenia’s chief military prosecutor from 1997 to 2006. They accused him of covering up crimes and abetting other abuses in the armed forces throughout his tenure.”

We had our own run-in with Mr. Jahangiryan when he held a sham trial in 1996 to hand over our sister publication, Azg daily, to a group of renegades, triggering an international outcry throughout the local media and Western embassies. Later on, another judge overturned the ruling and the paper was returned to its rightful owners. For the moment, we will refrain from going into the motivations for Mr. Jahangiryan’s unsavory actions.

We can see that Armenia does not have a mature opposition to help the parliament to conduct its normal business, nor a government devoid of traditional cronies, endemic in Armenia. Had Pashinyan’s team demonstrated the magnanimity of a winner, an entirely different political atmosphere would now reign there.

Still, Armenians have no other choice but to support the present government, while holding it accountable for its mistakes. The current government represents the will of the voters. No one yet has conducted a poll to find out what the other 50 percent of the voters who did not show up to vote think.

Remembering the days I spent in Yerevan, one fervent hope is framed in my mind: I hope the Titanic does not sink again.

Project SAVE Continues Documenting History One Family at a Time

SAVE, from page 1

the first non-Armenian literary journal that was based in Armenia and exported to bookstores worldwide. Vaun is also a poet and musician, having published and performed widely. Besides Armenia, he has also lived in Glasgow, Berlin, and Beirut.

Vaun, in an interview last week, said he believes the executive director position is a great fit, marrying his background in academia and the arts with an historic and creative mission. He said, “What I love about the photographs of Project SAVE is that they touch upon the intersection of culture, history, identity, and art.”

Vaun is determined to carry forward Thomasian’s and former director Tsoleen Sarian’s mission to put Project SAVE more “on the map” and outward looking. “We’re going to be opening it a lot more to younger demographics, non-Armenians, researchers, historians, artists, and filmmakers; it’s a treasure trove of so many incredible photographs. The 50th anniversary is the perfect time to take it to the next level.”

The celebration of culture in Project SAVE’s photographs connect with Vaun’s passion for “cultural work,” defined as, “whether it’s music or poetry, that’s what I’m concerned with; [it’s about] expressing or manifesting different ways and ques-



Diasporan Armenians gathering outdoors to eat in California, likely taking part in the long tradition of Armenian picnics. San Francisco, 1920s Courtesy of Leo Keoshian Credit: Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives

tions of what it means to be alive and be a human being.”

Vaun views cultural work as bigger than just preserving a nation’s history or focusing on ethnicity, “I believe the root cause of the difficult place the world is currently in has to do with the fact that we have often privileged consumerism and capital over culture and genuine connection,” he said.

The value of culture is, sadly, often revealed when it is lost, Vaun explains. “The fact that we even take this stuff for granted means that it’s very powerful. If you’re taking something for granted it means it’s so part of the fabric of everything that if it were to disappear tomorrow suddenly people would miss it.”

Project SAVE works to make sure that

the past, with its memories, history, and stories, is preserved, and stays connected to the present in order to inform and inspire the future, he noted.

Vaun wants to bring Project SAVE’s collections to institutions and people interested in this visual exploration of the Armenian journey. A large portion of the collection centers around the diasporan experience — Armenians becoming American. As Vaun explains, “These immigrants who are in these photographs, they are before our eyes in a state of becoming American or Argentinian or Lebanese or German and so forth.” He goes on to note how this on-the-surface uniquely diasporan Armenian experience is in fact universal. “It’s a fascinating story for any American because that’s everyone’s story. We all came from somewhere.”

Project SAVE has tens of thousands of photographs for people to explore. Its archivists work to catalog and digitize their collection of around 55,000 original photographs and documents of Armenian life in the homeland and diaspora. While only a small percentage of the collection is digitized, their website is available for professionals and the public alike to view a wealth of captioned photos sorted into groups based on themes, including, “Dance,” “Liberty” and “Commemorate.” Their team of archivists is working diligently to digitize and catalogue more of the archive and with the goal of having even more available online for public engagement.

The website also houses digital photo exhibits, such as “Armenian Picnics,” celebrating the gatherings where cultural traditions are passed from one generation to the next and “Spirit of Survival: Armenians through the Camera’s Eye,” commemorating Armenian resilience throughout the 1915 Genocide.

When asked to describe Project SAVE in three words Arto Vaun chose “Preservation, Creation, and Community.” He explained that while Project SAVE is “about preservation, I think going forward it should also be about creation and community. I mention community...in the sense of human connectedness,” he continued. “I think the creation part is about what comes out of having that preservation ... What do we do with all these memories and all these photos? We have to create and connect.”


Project SAVE wants to encourage that creation and connectedness through holding workshops that bring together the world of archiving and the communal world of cultural work. These workshops will feature professionals in different fields and will provide educational, artistic, and volunteering opportunities.

“We need to better appreciate cultural institutions, not just with words but with actual engagement, in whatever form that may take,” he noted.

Engagement doesn’t only need to come from those who already know or support Project SAVE. Vaun’s aim is to have “different demographics engage with the photos, and ultimately to walk away with something, whether it’s research, an artwork, or other tangible form of connection and creation,” showing that while Armenian archival work may be the backbone of Project SAVE, it is what people from all backgrounds create after coming to visit that matters most.

He concluded, “With this kind of unique visual archive, when you combine the academic and educational with creativity, art, and different perspectives, you can engage with a lot more people. That’s good for Project SAVE and it’s also good for the community [at large].”

To see a collection of their photographs, visit <https://www.projectsavet.org/>






The Tekeyan Cultural Association Is Rolling Up Its Sleeves Again

Before the 44-day war, we supported the development of the strategic Berdzor corridor and made large investments in the region. Berdzor and its neighboring regions (Kashatagh) have now fallen into enemy hands. All of a sudden, its residents, students and teachers were forced to become refugees and are now helplessly scattered all around Artsakh and Armenia. They have lost everything and their living conditions are less than desirable.

The good news is that once more Tekeyan is engaged to make their lives better, so that they remain in Armenia and become part of the nation-building process.

This time though the help will be achieved through investments and not through donations. The creation of a sustainable economy is the aim of this appeal.

Through small contributions / mass funding we will create income-generating opportunities for the displaced families. Tekeyan of Armenia in association with a local reputable Syunik NGO will make investments in agriculture to create income for their beneficiaries. The recipient gets assistance conditional that within 2 years they give back on an annual basis the equivalent of 10% of their produced goods to other needy families.



THIS IS A MODEL OF SUSTAINABLE ASSISTANCE, YEAR AFTER YEAR

Participations are tax deductible. Checks to be made to


Tekeyan Cultural Association, memo Berdzor refugee assistance				
\$100	\$250	\$500	\$1000	other \$ _____

Send donation to


Tekeyan Cultural Association, 755 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472 USA

Name: _____

Address: _____



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